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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
LORD WESTER WEMYSS
ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET



[Photo: Russell, Ltd.]

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
LORD
WESTER WEMYSS

G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O.
ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET

BY
LADY WESTER WEMYSS

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FOREWORD

FOR the aid and assistance given to this work, compiled almost entirely from private letters, fragments of the memoirs Lord Wester Wemyss had at one time hoped to write, and recollections of relatives, brother-officers and other friends, my grateful thanks are above all due to Lady Constance Butler for the letters written during the Boer War and the cruise of H.M.S. *Ophir*; to Admirals Sir R. Burmester and Sir E. Manisty, Captain Bevan, R.N., and Sir Harry Luke for their war reminiscences; to Mr. W. Harbutt Dawson for the Memorandum on the Nationalization of Armaments; to Captain Agar, V.C., for his description of the raid on Cronstadt in which he himself bore so great and glorious a part; and last, but not least, to Mr. D. L. Smith, Librarian of the Admiralty, for his unvarying kindness and help.

VICTORIA WESTER WEMYSS

VILLA MONBRILLANT, CANNES

April 1935

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
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ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD

ON the rocky shores of the Firth of Forth, in sight of where not many miles away the German Fleet was to surrender on November 21st 1918, rise stern and grey the walls of Wemyss Castle. Storm-beaten and weather-stained, they have for nearly a thousand years sheltered the family of Wemyss, a family whose origins extend into the remote past. Said by tradition to descend from Macduff Thane of Fife, a name still borne by the ruins of another ancient Wemyss stronghold, their first proved ancestor was Michael of Methil and Wemyss who lived in the reign of William the Lion (1165-1214), and the oldest Wemyss charters at present extant were granted by his son John of Wemyss, though more ancient ones still may have been destroyed when Wemyss Castle was looted and burnt by the English soldiery in 1306. For Michael, John of Wemyss' son and successor (1265-1319), was one of the Scottish Barons who had sworn fealty to King Edward of England, and King Edward during his progress in Fife in 1304 "lay for a night and a day" at the "manor of Wemyss" and from there dictated a summons to a Parliament at St. Andrews. When, however, King Robert the Bruce came forward in defence of the rights of Scotland, Sir Michael joined his standard, and was in consequence outlawed as a traitor by the English King, whose army overran and destroyed Sir Michael's lands, only saved from confiscation by King Edward's opportune death in 1307, before again crossing the Scottish border.

Sir Michael's son David (*s.* 1320; *d.* 1330), was one of the two Ambassadors who in 1290 were sent to Norway by the Scottish Estates to bring back the Princess Margaret; granddaughter and heiress of King Alexander III, killed by a fall from his horse at Kinghorn in 1286. But the "Maid of Norway" never reached her kingdom, for she was

taken ill and died in the Orkney Islands, and Sir David Wemyss and Sir Michael Scott, the two Commissioners, could only return with the news of her untimely end.

A silver basin presented by the King of Norway to Sir David in recognition of his services is still used as a christening-bowl by the members of the Wemyss family.

After his father's death, somewhere about 1320, Sir David continued to take a leading part in public life, and joined with other Barons of Scotland in the famous letter to the Pope in which the heads of the National Party set forth so powerfully their claims to liberty and national rights.

During the ensuing centuries the House of Wemyss took its full share in all the feuds and struggles of the times, and their name was to figure on almost every page of Scottish history. Like all their contemporaries, joining sometimes one side, sometimes the other, they fought with varying success, were taken prisoner, were hostages at the English Court, perished on the field of battle. But notwithstanding constant vicissitudes they still by inheritance, by marriage, by purchase contrived greatly to add to their lands in Wemyss-shire, as that part of Fife came to be called, and, being of a progressive disposition, did much to develop them. As far back as 1428 coal was already being worked and salt manufactured in the parish of Wemyss, and their "coal heughs" and salt-pans were a constant source of preoccupation as well as of revenue to the Lairds of Wemyss.

Yet in those troublous times it was ever defence—defence of their property, defence of their native shores—which had to be the principal task.

In 1547 Sir John Wemyss (1544-73), taken prisoner at the Battle of Pinkie, that disastrous defeat of the Scots by the English, but afterwards delivered, was entrusted with the defence of "the Kingdom." According to Bishop Lesley:

The Laird of Wemyss being somewhat sickly, had

returned from the camp to Wemyss and descrying the approach of the English fleet caused such watch to be kept day and night that no attempt to land could be made without detection. The Laird himself however was the first to observe such an attempt. The very night the English Admiral Lord Clinton proposed to land his troops, the Laird came down before daylight to examine the watch and seeing lights and commotion among the English vessels divined their intention and took means to prevent it. He aroused the men in and about St. Monans who did not muster above six score and stationing the greater part of them at the most effective point of resistance at that place, he, with the remainder, proceeded two miles along the coast to make closer observation of the proceedings. Satisfied from what he saw that the English were about to attempt a landing, he returned to St. Monans and drew up his men in order to await their approach. As soon as the day dawned, the English came and were received with a flight of arrows which was followed by a sharp engagement at close quarters. Then, by prearrangement, Wemyss and his men retired behind some trenches in which they kindled a collection of ferns, straw and other materials, making a great smoke, under cover of which they fired upon the invaders with three small pieces of cannon which they had with them. The men in the trenches then reformed and with shouts and yells bore furiously down upon the English, who at the same time were assailed in flank by the shouts and cries of another company. The smoke prevented them from seeing that this second body was but a heterogeneous mass of non-combatants, men, women and children, appointed by the Laird to play this little *ruse de guerre*. But it answered the purpose effectually. The Englishmen, thus taken, as they supposed, in front and flank, turned and fled to their ships pursued by the Scots, who slew them even as they struggled in the water, so that of a few thousand who landed, not three hundred returned to the Fleet and Lord Clinton himself escaped with difficulty. When he did reach his ship he at once gave orders to set sail. So great was the effect of this repulse that during the rest of the war no further attempt was made to land in Fife.

The *River Clyde*, the smoke-screen at Zeebrugge, exploits in which Rosslyn Wemyss, Sir John's descendant, was to take so great a part, seem foreshadowed by this *ruse de guerre* of his sixteenth-century ancestor, from whom he appears to have inherited not only resourcefulness and courage but much of his sturdy spirit of independence. For Sir John, loyal subject though he was, when the Queen Dowager Mary of Guise sought to tax the people for the purpose of raising an army of foreign mercenaries, placed himself at the head of the opposition and so energetically signified the almost universal refusal to trust to hired men the defence of hearth and home that the tax had to be abandoned.

But when, during the Reformation crisis, the Lords demanded that Sir John should subscribe to the Covenant or be accounted by them an enemy to the Commonwealth, he refused with equal energy.

Appointed by the Dowager Queen her Lieutenant of the counties of Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan, it was in 1564-5 at Wemyss Castle that Queen Mary, during a progress through Fife, first beheld from one of the windows, still pointed out, her future husband Henry Darnley riding into the courtyard. A sculptured medallion of the Queen on the walls of the Castle commemorates the event to this day.

When, on the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, King James set out for the South to enter into his inheritance, the Laird of Wemyss of the time, another Sir John (1597-1622) was amongst those who accompanied him.

In 1511 Sir David Wemyss, afterwards killed at the Battle of Flodden, had obtained from King James IV the merging of his three baronies, Methil, Wemyss, and Wester Wemyss, into one, the Barony of Wemyss, with power to erect the new haven town (the present West Wemyss) and other towns into free burghs.

In 1628 King Charles I conferred on Sir John Wemyss (1622-49) the dignity and rank of a Lord of Parliament by

the title of Lord Wemyss of Elcho, and a few years later, on the occasion of his coronation at Holyrood in 1633, created him Earl of Wemyss and Lord Elcho of Methil. Most lovable, both in public and in private life, it was written of him when appointed King's Commissioner to the General Assembly in 1638 that "the modestye and simplicitie of the man makes him displeasing to none." Ardent Presbyterians, both he and his son subscribed the Covenant in Grey Friars churchyard in 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant in 1644—and when relations became strained between the King and people, owing to the efforts of Charles I to force episcopacy on the Scotch, had no hesitation in throwing in their lot with the majority of their countrymen.

Earl John died in 1649 and was succeeded by his son David (1649-79), the Great Earl, as he is to this day called in Fife.

Soldier and statesman, gifted with extraordinary energy of character and ability, he spent more than forty years of his life in taking a leading part in the civil, military, and ecclesiastical affairs of the country during one of the most stirring periods of Scottish history.

But the activities of Earl David were by no means confined to the affairs of the nation, exacting as they often were, for he devoted much time and zeal to the management of his estates and their development.

He sank pits, worked coal and ironstone, erected salt-pans, built in face of most incredible difficulties the two harbours of Methil and Wemyss from which to export his salt and coal, and may be said to have laid the foundation of the great coal trade in Fife. He was the first to work coal under the sea, early realized the dangers of spontaneous ignition, and laid down minute instructions to his posterity as to the position of the coal-seams and their working, which have proved useful up to the present day.

These directions and many others are contained in his diary, a diary begun, when only Master of Elcho, residing in the Manor of Chapel Garden, he continued to within a few days of his death. One of its earliest entries relates to the incident when the Service Book, to which as strong Presbyterians both he and his father greatly objected, was first attempted to be read in St. Giles' Cathedral, and sum religiis men and women of all sortes did so heatt it that they would not permitt it to be read in Edinburgh and first at the ridding of the sead service bouk, the good religiis wimen did rise up to the ridder and flang their bouks and their stoules att him, and did rive all the service bouks a peisses. And the Bishop of Edinburgh, called Mister David Lindesy, quho was sitting in the kirk, that caused reide itt, was so stoned with the wifes and knocked that he was forced to flie to ane steare benorth the crosse, and did wine up, other ways they head killed him.

This stair happened to be the one of "my Lord Wemise's lodging," the historic house which was to become the meeting-place of the nobles who devised steps to be taken to prevent the spread of the so-called "Popish Doctrines."

Thirty years later, Earl David was noting with equal detail that

on the last day of Aprill 1667, the Holland's flitte inueadded Scotland, and cam up that day to Bruneiland with 30 good ships, sum of 60 sum of 50 gunes a peisse, besides 10 littile ones. They did offer to land to have brunt all the ships in Bruneiland, but was beattem back, and they shotte above 1000 gritte shotte att itt, sum of 24 lb. bolle, and did not kille man, wife, or child. . . . Three of the King's ships was riding in Leith Rode, whoe weayed and went above the Queen's ferrie, when I shotte 3 cannone off the House of Wemyss to warn them of the Hollanders being so near to them, so the enemie did not persue them at all.

In the interval of those thirty years what events had not Earl David witnessed and taken part in! He had sat in

Parliament, Council, and General Assembly, had led the armies of the Covenant against the great Montrose, been one of the two Commissioners deputed by the Kirk Party to meet Charles II in Scotland on his taking the Covenant, had been appointed Sheriff of Fife under the Commonwealth, and finally was one of those who, in London, had welcomed King Charles II on his restoration, a restoration to which his wife Margaret, the widowed Countess of Buccleuch, had greatly contributed. Earl David had married three times—first at the age of seventeen Ann Balfour, daughter of Lord Burghley; secondly, Lady Helen Fleming; and thirdly, Lady Margaret Leslie, daughter of the Earl of Rothes, who, like him, had already been twice widowed. Lord Balgonie, the Earl of Leven's eldest son, was her first husband; Francis, Earl of Buccleuch, her second; she was thus the ancestress of the three houses of Leven, Buccleuch, and Wemyss. A woman both masterful and managing, it was, as already mentioned, greatly due to her influence over General Monk that Charles II owed his throne; she then proceeded to marry her daughter, the heiress of Buccleuch, to the King's son, the Duke of Monmouth.

Of Earl David's sixteen children only two daughters were to survive, and the greatest grief of his latter days was not having a male heir. For years his hopes had centred on David, Lord Elcho, a boy of great promise.

My wankle tells me (wrote the Duchess of Monmouth to her stepfather) that my brother is grow the boniest little man that he ever did se, and I am extremely glad to hear it. I hop on God that he shall be a comfort to your Lordship and my Lady when you are both a hunder yers oldd.

But these hopes were destined to be shattered.

The Lord giues and He taks—all is His. But we being in a sade conditione, sauing His holy pleasure, I must shew

that David Wemyss, my second sone, heir aboue named, being 16 yeirs old and 6 months and 15 days, died att Wemyss, 28th September 1671 at 5 morning, he being my only sone of 10. He was buried 10 October 1671 at Wemyss Kirk.

Thus records the diary.

Resolved that Wemyss, whatever happened, should remain in possession of a Wemyss, Earl David proceeded to settle his titles and estates on his youngest daughter, Margaret, only surviving child of Margaret Leslie, to the exclusion of his eldest daughter, the Countess of Sutherland, and a few months after her brother's death to marry her at the early age of thirteen to her cousin Sir James Wemyss of Burntisland, afterwards created Lord Burntisland. On the death of Earl David in 1679 she became Countess of Wemyss in her own right.

"This choicest and most delightful of women," as she is described by her second husband, the Earl of Cromartie, in a somewhat florid Latin inscription, died in 1705, and was succeeded by her son David, third Earl, who was appointed in 1708 Commissioner for the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland. He supported the Union through all the debates in Parliament, and was chosen one of the sixteen peers representing the Scottish nobility at Westminster, while Queen Anne created him Lord High Admiral of Scotland and the Isles. Mackey, one of the Secret Service agents of the time, describes him as: representative of the ancient family of that name and is a very fine gentleman. He, as his family hath ever been, is zealous for the liberty of the people and for bringing down the power of the Crown. He hath not yet been in the Administration; is a fine personage and very beautiful; hath good sense and is a man of honour, about thirty years old.

He died at a comparatively early age, and his son James, fourth Earl, did not prove remarkable in any way, except

perhaps by his elopement with and marriage to Janet, only daughter of Colonel Charteris of Annisfield, a man who even in that century of lax morals was notorious for his vices and profligacy.

Twice condemned to death for various crimes, said to have practised black magic and made a pact with the Evil One, he lived apparently unmolested and on the best of terms with many distinguished judges, and died peacefully, leaving a large fortune to his grandson Francis—Lord Wemyss' second son—on condition of his assuming the name of Charteris.

Lord Wemyss' marriage did not turn out a happy one, and he finally separated from his wife, with whom and his son Francis he later on was to find himself in constant litigation, while his eldest son Elcho was outlawed and attainted for having taken a leading part in the Rebellion of 1745.

The House of Wemyss had ever given adherence to the Stuart dynasty; indeed, how could it be otherwise with all the Stuart traditions clinging to the walls of their ancient castle which had so often afforded shelter and hospitality to those of the Stuart race?

David, third Earl, had retired to his home on the accession of the House of Hanover. His son, the fourth Earl, steadfastly declined to take the oath of allegiance. Small wonder, therefore, that his eldest son, Lord Elcho, should early have imbibed principles which led him to throw in his lot with those who were seeking to restore the Stuarts on the throne. While travelling on the Continent he had spent six months in Rome, and had been received with much distinction at their Court, and ever since had been amongst their most active partisans. When, therefore, in August 1745 news came that Prince Charles had landed and that he was at Perth, Elcho left Wemyss Castle on September 11th, never to return, crossed the Forth, and after being present next

day at Preston Hall, at his brother Francis Charteris' wedding with Lady Frances Gordon, joined the Prince at Gray's Mill. At noon on September 17th Charles entered Edinburgh with Elcho, appointed his principal aide-de-camp, riding by his side. Greeted with enthusiasm, the cries for the House of Stuart, the entry into Holyrood, the universal joy presaged success, while the commission conferred on Elcho as Colonel of the Prince's Horse Guards on the battle-field of Prestonpans testified to the part he had taken in the triumph, a triumph which was to be short-lived.

The struggle of 1745 was brief and sharp: a short and brilliant series of victories, the invasion of England, and then an equally rapid retreat. Disaster came on April 15th at Culloden. In vain did Elcho successfully repel an attempt to envelop the right wing of the Prince's army. According to Sir Walter Scott:

*After the left wing of the Highlanders was repulsed and broken at Culloden, Elcho rode up to the Chevalier and told him all was lost and that nothing remained except to charge at the head of two thousand men, who were still unbroken and either turn the fate of the day or die sword in hand as became his pretensions. The Chevalier gave him some evasive answer and turning his horse's head, rode off the field. Lord Elcho called after him (I write the very words) "There you go for a damned, cowardly Italian" and never would see him again, though he lost his property and remained an exile in the cause.

Elcho soon after escaped into France, and hardly had reached Paris than he applied to the British Government for a pardon, a request in the future often repeated and always refused. He was to spend the rest of his days, a homeless exile, wandering between Paris, Venice, and Rome, vainly trying to recover large sums he had lent Prince Charles, from whom he was now definitely estranged, while

* Journal, February 10th, 1826.

hoping to re-establish his fortunes by a rich marriage. Finally at the age of fifty-five he married Baroness Uxkuell, only to lose her in the following year. He died in Paris in 1787, when the title devolved upon his brother Francis Charteris.

With the passing of the Stuarts the age of romance and adventure was to come to a close. His eldest son attained and in exile, his second son Francis in possession of his grandfather's property and name, Lord Wemyss now proceeded to make a settlement by which the estates of Wemyss were to pass to the Honourable James, his third son, who thus became Wemyss of Wemyss. James had entered the Navy, a profession considered befitting the grandson of a Lord High Admiral, but on his father's death in 1756 he retired, married his cousin Lady Betty Sutherland, settled down at Wemyss, and devoted himself to the management of the property, which, owing to fines and constant family lawsuits, had become sadly involved.

In 1760 he entered Parliament, first representing Fife and afterwards Sutherlandshire, a county with which he had near connections owing to the guardianship of his niece, the infant Countess of Sutherland, whose claims to the peerage he had successfully upheld before the House of Lords.

James Wemyss died in 1786 and was succeeded by his son General William Wemyss, who trod in his father's footsteps in all except by preferring a military to a naval career. He, too, represented Sutherlandshire and then Fife in Parliament, while as a soldier he raised the regiment afterwards called the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders, but first known as Major-General Wemyss' Regiment.

He had married in 1788 Frances, daughter of Sir William Erskine of Torrie, through whom the lands of Torrie and Lundin eventually came into the family.

Their eldest son, James Erskine Wemyss, entered the

Navy when only twelve years old as volunteer on board the *Unicorn*, commanded by his uncle Captain Charles Wemyss, one of the few survivors of the *Royal George* when she foundered with Admiral Kempenfelt at Spithead in 1782. He then served under Sir Edward Pellew (afterwards created Lord Exmouth), with whom during his fourteen years on active service he was most often to be associated, took part in the naval operations against Genoa, was appointed Post-Captain in command of the *Rainbow*, and retired in 1814.

After the termination of his naval career Captain Wemyss represented Fife in Parliament from 1820-1830. True to the Liberal ideas ever held by his family, he voted for the Reform Bill, which caused him to be rejected by his constituency. But on the first election under the enlarged franchise in 1832 he was returned unopposed, and remained so until his retirement in 1847; ten years previously he had been appointed Lord Lieutenant, an office he held to his death. Full of humour and originality, his ready wit, his personal popularity, the great influence he wielded, had made the Admiral, as he had by then become, an almost legendary figure. To this day, endless stories about him, his political contests, his many eccentricities are current in Fife, and when his grandson attained flag rank in 1911 great were the rejoicings amongst the ancient retainers and those to whom his name had become a household word that once more there was an "Admiral" amongst them.

Admiral Wemyss married in 1826 Lady Emma Hay, youngest daughter of the sixteenth Earl of Errol, whose elder sister had married his younger brother, General Wemyss, so that the two brothers were at the same time brothers-in-law.

His son James Hay Erskine Wemyss (b. 1829) had, like his father, entered the Navy, from which, however, ill-health early obliged him to retire. An excellent landlord, his frankness, cordiality, and kindness endeared him to all,

and when in a hotly contested election in 1859 he stood against his cousin Lord Loughborough he was elected with a considerable majority as member for West Fife. In January 1864, he was appointed Lord Lieutenant in succession to Lord Elgin, who had died in India; but not for long.

Wemyss Castle is said to be haunted, and in the early spring of 1864 he and his sister, Mrs. Balfour, were standing at one of the windows looking out over the sea and some newly built terraces on which the moon was shining brightly. He was complaining of feeling ill when all of a sudden there was a crash and part of the terrace smashed and fell. He turned to his sister and said:

I am a dead man, for as a warning to the owner of Wemyss Castle of his early approaching death a piece of masonry always falls.

She tried to laugh him out of the idea, but in vain. In a few days they went to London, and very shortly afterwards, on March 29th, Hay Wemyss was dead, a fortnight before his youngest son, Rosslyn, was born.

He had married in 1855 Augusta Millicent, youngest daughter of the Hon. John Kennedy Erskine, second son of the twelfth Earl of Cassilis, subsequently created Marquess of Ailsa, and Lady Augusta Fitzclarence, daughter of the Duke of Clarence, afterwards King William IV, by the famous, fascinating, and unhappy actress Dorothy Jordan.

William Henry, third son of George III and Charlotte of Mecklenburg, the "Sailor King" as he came to be called, was born in 1765 and entered the Navy as a midshipman before he was fourteen. Devoted to his profession, taking his duties seriously, he gained the friendship of Nelson, who, writing to William Locker (February 25th 1783), says:

He is a seaman which you could hardly suppose, with every other qualification you may expect from him, but he

will be a disciplinarian and a strong one . . . with the best temper and great good sense, he cannot fail of being pleasing to everyone;

and again to the same:

He has his foibles as well as private men, but they are outbalanced by his virtues. In his professional line he is superior to near two thirds, I am sure, of the list and in attention to orders and respect for his superior officers I hardly know his equal: this is what I have found him.

Of the eleven years he spent in the Navy nine were on active service, and he saw fighting against Spain and France. He was the last to hold the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, so that his great-grandson, the future First Sea Lord, could claim descent on the paternal side from the last Scotch Lord High Admiral, David, third Earl of Wemyss, and on the maternal side from the last English one.

In 1789 Prince William Henry was created Duke of Clarence and Earl of Munster, while, amongst other residences, the Lodge at Richmond was assigned to him, and it was there he was to meet and hopelessly succumb to the charms of Mrs. Jordan, an actress who a few years previously had taken the town by storm.

The daughter of an Irish gentleman of small fortunes but respectable connections who had eloped with the daughter of a Welsh clergyman, Dora Bland, as she then was, had made her appearance on the Dublin stage at an early age, when she was described by Josiah Barrington, a youthful "blood" at Trinity College, as

perfect even on her first appearance. She had no art, in fact, to study; nature was her sole instructress. Youthful, joyous, animated and droll, her laugh bubbled up from her heart and her tears welled ingenuously from the deep spring of feeling. Her countenance was all expression without being all beauty; her form, then light and elastic, her flexible limbs, the juvenile but indescribable grace

of her every movement, impressed themselves, as I perceived indelibly, upon all who attended even her earliest performances.

The secret of her irresistible charm resided above all in her bewitching smile and her laugh.

The most enlivening thing in nature, equally beyond praise or description: it rose gradually and as gradually diminished and the last sigh of its existence was as natural and effective as its loudest moment.

Her greatest triumph on the London stage had been as Peggy in the "Country Girl," but it was as Pickle in the "Spoilt Child" that she conquered the heart of the Duke of Clarence. She was then living with Richard Ford, her manager, by whom she had two daughters and whom she hoped to marry, and it was some time before her royal lover could induce her to transfer her affections. When she finally consented to do so, it was to take up her abode with him at Bushey House, where she lived for many years, his wife in all but name, bearing him ten children, on the best of terms with the Prince Regent and other members of the Duke's family, who received her kindly and treated her with affection and consideration.

My two beloved boys (George and Henry) are now at home . . . we shall have a full and merry house at Christmas. 'Tis what the dear Duke delights in; a happier set, when all together, I believe never existed. The ill-natured parts of the world never can enjoy the tranquil pleasures of domestic happiness.

This letter of Mrs. Jordan bears witness to her felicity, a felicity which was not to prove lasting.

In 1811 the Duke of Clarence, whether pressed thereto by his mother, Queen Charlotte, or with a view to matrimony, or owing to financial difficulties, suddenly determined to sever the connection. To Mrs. Jordan this resolve came

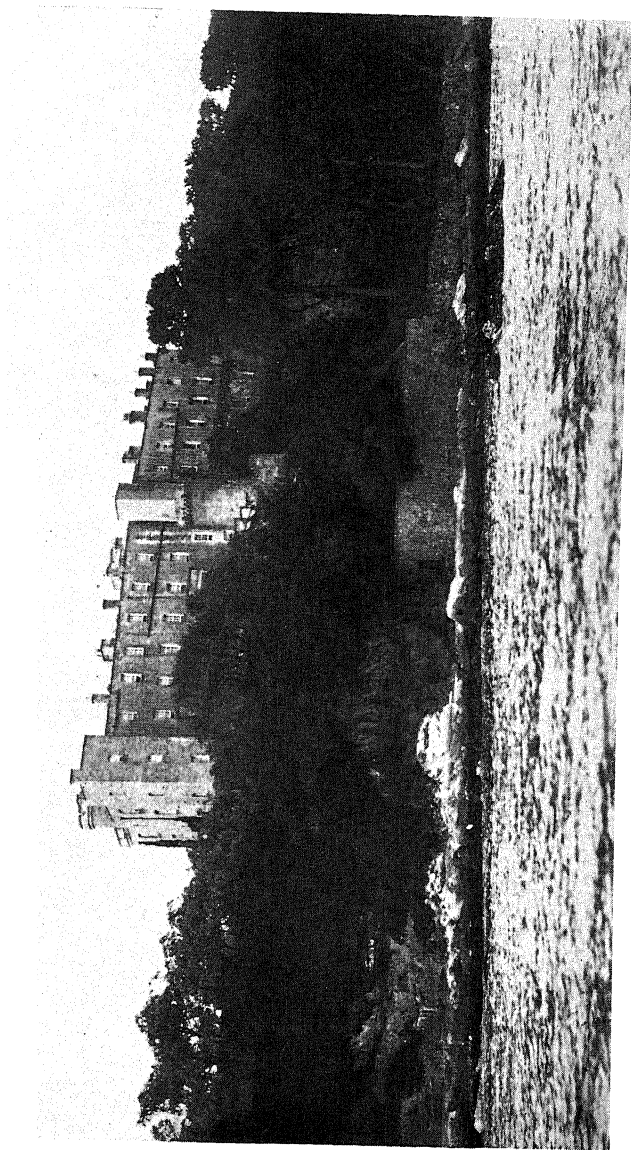
like a bolt from the blue, but she behaved with great dignity and forbearance. She had never completely abandoned the stage, having intermittently acted even when living at Bushey House; she therefore determined to return to her profession.

Notwithstanding the large sums she had derived from her talents—and at one time she was said to be making over £7,000 a year, which was unheard-of at that period—her lavish generosity, the pleasure she had in bestowing kindnesses all around her, had never enabled her to put by. Moreover, passionately fond of her children, her great desire had ever been to provide handsomely for her elder daughters, who were not the children of her protector. The heavy calls made upon her by their establishment, the debts subsequently incurred by her two sons-in-law proved sources of great pecuniary embarrassment. Ruined, obliged to sell her house and to fly from her creditors, she retired abroad, first to Boulogne and then to St. Cloud, where she died in most abject misery in 1817, not one of her thirteen children being with her at the time of her death.

Heartlessly—nay, cruelly—as the Duke of Clarence had treated Mrs. Jordan, to his children he was to prove himself a kind and affectionate father.

He kept them with him, and when he married Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, her desire not to part her husband from the sons and daughters he loved brought them to Court, where she treated the Fitzclarence family with motherly kindness to the day of her death.

On succeeding to the throne William IV created his eldest son Earl of Munster, while granting to his younger children the rank and precedence of those of a marquess. He provided careers for his sons: the Army for his two elder ones; the Navy for Adolphus, who rose to the rank of Admiral and long commanded Queen Victoria's yacht; the rectory of Maple Durham for his clerical son Augustus.



WEMYSS CASTLE

Of his five daughters, Sophia, the eldest, married Charles Sidney, eldest son of Sir John Sidney, afterwards created Lord de L'Isle and Dudley; Mary, the second, Colonel Fox, a son of Lord Holland; Elizabeth, the third, the Earl of Errol; and Amelia, the youngest, Viscount Falkland.

His fourth daughter, Augusta, had married in 1827 the Honourable John Kennedy, who, through his mother, Lady Cassilis, was heir to the Erskines of Dun, an ancient family whose most illustrious member, Sir John Erskine, is famous in history as one of the great figures of the Scotch Reformation, the friend and protector of John Knox. Their seat is Dun, in the County of Angus, not far from Montrose, and it was there that John Kennedy Erskine and his bride settled down after their marriage. They were a striking-looking couple, for he was remarkably handsome and she was beautiful, with the charm of manner and irresistible speaking voice inherited from her mother. Their happiness, however, was not to be of long duration, for in a very few years John Kennedy Erskine developed consumption, and, though they started without delay for a warmer climate, it was too late, for he soon afterwards died at Pisa.

One of the first acts of kingship of William IV was to send a man-of-war to bring home his daughter, then expecting her confinement, and it was at Windsor Castle that, two months later, her third child, a daughter, was born, and christened Millicent by the Queen's chaplain.

Lady Augusta, with her children William Henry, Williamina, and Millicent, then settled at Isleworth under the protection of her parents-in-law, Lord and Lady Ailsa; but when after four years of widowhood she married Admiral Lord John Frederick Gordon, son of the Marquess of Huntly, the King invented a post for her as State House-keeper of Kensington Palace, with a suite of rooms for herself.

Not her children only, but many of their numerous

cousins, looked back with delight to the happy days spent at Kensington Palace—to the wonderful expeditions they made on its roof, to Bordeaux the old French cook, who not only prepared but himself served the most delicious dishes, while in his spare time, armed with a huge pair of tortoise-shell spectacles, he put in the background of Lady Augusta's needlework, for she was a wonderful needlewoman and Dun is still full of her exquisite embroideries; gardening, too, was one of her favourite pursuits.

When her children grew up, her son, the Laird of Dun, entered the Army, and she and her husband took her daughters abroad; they paid long visits to the Court of Hanover, where King Ernest Augustus welcomed his favourite niece with joy; they spent several seasons in Paris, where the beauty of the mother, the loveliness of the daughters, created somewhat of a sensation. Of the two sisters, Williamina was the more regular beauty, but Millicent was perhaps even more attractive with her rose-leaf complexion and golden-red hair which had gained her the nickname *Louis d'Or*; her admirers were numerous, Prince Louis Napoleon himself being credited with a wish to marry her.

Many, many years later, when her son, then a young naval officer, was presented at Cowes on board the Royal Yacht to the Empress Eugénie, she turned to him with a quick question: "Are you the son of *Louis d'Or*?"—proof positive that ancient rivalries had not been completely forgotten.

In 1855 the two sisters married on the same day: Williamina, her cousin Lord Munster; Millicent, Hay Wemyss of Wemyss Castle.

In Scotland life had been attuned to a minor key since the '45 Rebellion had ruined so many of the great estates heavily mulcted in fines, and driven their owners into exile, while those that remained were torn by fierce faction-fights.

The Scotch, proud and impoverished, filled with a burning dislike of everything English, a dislike heartily reciprocated, bent on mending their shattered fortunes, were led to concentrate more and more on their local interests, while what furthermore tended to restrict them within their borders and narrow their horizon was the almost universal custom of seeking their alliances exclusively among their relatives or country neighbours; was it not the Wemyss family's proud boast up to the last generation that not a drop of English blood flowed in their veins? Even when business or pleasure called them South they were wont to associate almost entirely with their countrymen, and, as the saying is, "kept themselves to themselves."

This went on for several generations, even down to the time when Mrs. Wemyss came to Fife after her marriage. Young, beautiful, and high-spirited, accustomed to the great world, not of London alone but of the Continent, she found it difficult at the outset to adapt herself to her surroundings. More Scotch than the Scotch on her father's side—for what can be more so than Kennedys or Erskines of Dun?—she had inherited from her mother not only love for foreign travel, intellectual and artistic tastes now difficult to gratify, but great unconventionality, which conformed but ill to the narrow prescriptions of county society and her prim and proper neighbours. Fife might therefore easily have proved uncongenial had it not been for the love of her new home and of her young, good-looking, adored and adoring husband. But when bereft of him, alone in the world with the care of five young children, the last born posthumous, as she herself had been, and the management of a heavily encumbered estate, she put aside her own inclinations and devoted herself whole-heartedly to the task.

Evincing hitherto unsuspected business capacities and a veritable genius for organization, she threw herself with

energy into the management of the property. The development of the minerals was her outstanding preoccupation, and when the Franco-German War brought unprecedented prosperity to the coal-fields, she took full advantage by building and rebuilding docks and harbours, obtaining powers to construct the Buckhaven-Thornton railway, and in every manner seeking to accommodate the estate to the ever-expanding trade.

Nor was she less zealous in furthering the welfare of the population; she greatly added and improved the housing accommodation, and after the cholera epidemic of 1874-5 never ceased her efforts till the parish of Wemyss possessed what no other parish in Scotland had at the time, a complete water-supply, with water in every house.

When, after fifteen years, her stewardship came to an end, she was able, as a result of her careful and successful management, to hand over the estate to her son free and unencumbered, with a rent roll of over £30,000 a year.

Meanwhile her children were growing up. Endowed with good looks quite out of the common, brilliant, high-spirited, warm-hearted, and hot-tempered, they proved absolutely intractable to the rapidly changing succession of governesses and tutors who undertook their education. The only authority they bowed to was that of their mother, who, immersed in the cares of the estate, saw but little of them. The other chief influence was that of James Pringle, the stud-groom and "Pimmy," his wife; she had come to Wemyss as a young housemaid in the days of the Admiral and was to live to the age of ninety-six, having seen five generations of Wemyss and her beloved Rosy attain the highest honours in the Navy during the War.

Scampering all over the country on their ponies or dashing through the villages in their "cuddy-cart," scattering sweets to the bairns, the five children were welcomed by all; for, differing in many respects, they were one in their

passionate attachment to Wemyss and everyone and everything pertaining thereto. In those days the bonds which linked the cottage to the castle were very close indeed; joys and sorrows were shared alike, for there still lingered, as in many parts of Scotland, much of the feudal spirit in its highest and best form, i.e. that of mutual service. It was this which, when during the Boer War the Laird raised a regiment of horse, caused him to be followed, like in the Middle Ages by a large contingent of men from his own estate, while his younger brother never took up a command either in peace or war, on land or sea, on the shores of Gallipoli or the banks of the Tigris, without ascertaining whether any "men of Wemyss" were there, and if so, making them the objects of his special care and solicitude.

The eldest of Mrs. Wemyss' children, Dora Mina Kittina, born 1856, known to her friends as "Mimini," had inherited Mrs. Jordan's beautiful voice and Lady Augusta's tastes for needlework and gardening. She founded the Wemyss' School of Needlework, which continues to this day, having discovered in Mrs. Webster, the wife of a farmer on the estate, a veritable talent for sewing, while she herself designed all the original patterns as well as those of the Wemyss pottery which at one time enjoyed considerable vogue. She married in 1889 Lord Henry Grosvenor, third son of the first Duke of Westminster, and died in 1894. The second daughter, Mary Frances, born 1857, married in 1882 Cecil son of General Lord George Paget, sixth son of the Marquess of Anglesey, and died in 1923. The three sons were Randolph Gordon Erskine, the Laird, born 1858 and died 1908; Hugo Erskine, born 1861 and died 1933; and finally the youngest born 1864 and christened Rosslyn after his godfather Lord Rosslyn, son of the Admiral's sister, who many years before had, as Lord Loughborough, been defeated by Hay Wemyss in the West Fife election. Rosslyn soon turned into Rosy, and as such he was to be affectionately known,

not to his friends alone, but to the entire Navy. Of all Mrs. Wemyss' children he was the one who most resembled her both morally and physically. He had the same clearness of vision, the same immense capacity for work, the same talent of organization. In appearance he bore a striking likeness to William IV, while from Mrs. Jordan he had inherited the enchanting smile and infectious laugh that had for so long made that great actress the idol of London audiences, and which in her descendant, added to his invincible optimism, was, according to the testimony of his brother-officers, to prove so great an asset not only to the Navy but to the nation during the darkest hours of the war.

There are those at Wemyss who still remember him, a merry little boy with long curls in a velvet suit clinging to the hand of his French *bonne* Marie, whom he adored and who early inculcated in him that love of France and everything French which was to characterize him to the end. His cousin, Mrs. Jacob,* writes:

The main thing I remember about him, besides the fact that we loved him dearly, was his devotion to the theatre. Looking back I realize what a great interest he took in the doings of the grown-up world and how much he noticed dress and manners and what a joy to him the spectacle was. My mother often described to me her recollection of him at Wemyss as a small boy, allowed to stay up for a bit in the drawing-room after dinner, so sleepy that he could not keep his eyes open and sitting under the piano (while it was being played) to keep himself awake lest he should be sent off to bed. He learnt French early and from what I can remember spoke it fluently and he would often break into it at odd times, rather to the embarrassment of us children, who knew it as an occasional detested lesson and no more. I remember once, when he dressed up in a voluminous skirt belonging to the governess and suddenly appeared before us, saying "*Au revoir—au revoir—au revoir!*" as he retreated backwards, blowing kisses

* Violet Erskine Kennedy, author of "The Sheep Stealers," "The Interlopers," "Songs of Angus," etc., married Colonel Jacob.

from the tips of his fingers. We were rather annoyed because we were playing some game of our own and did not know that his soul was in the theatre and that he was being a *prima donna* disappearing behind the curtain amid the applause of the audience. One winter that we spent in Kensington Gate he was with us a great deal, and at Christmas he said we must have a play, which he proceeded to invent. It was to be called "A Scene in the Kitchen" and he was to be the cook. I've forgotten what the plot was except that it was something rather violent and that the orchestra was a footman we had with red whiskers, called Robert, who played "Spring, Spring, Beautiful Spring," on the fiddle, dreadfully out of tune. I can see Rosy now, in a print dress and a cap, on his knees in the centre of the stage, his arms raised to Heaven, singing at the top of his voice.

He was often sent to the play in charge of the footman, his mother declining to accompany her family after having on one occasion taken them to a melodrama, when, to her horror, during the most pathetic scene, all five rose up, knelt in their stalls as if in church, and burst into noisy sobs.

In that pleasant, hospitable age Wemyss was a great centre, always peopled with guests coming and going, amongst the most welcome being Lady Harlech and her daughter, now the Hon. Lady Egerton, who thus describes Wemyss in the seventies:

What I recall chiefly was Mrs. Wemyss' warm-hearted welcome and at the same time she was so very much the chatelaine of an olden time castle with its rugged and dour exterior, in contrast to its comfortable interior according to one's ideas of comfort in those days of the last century, roaring fires and bountiful repasts, especially at tea-time. Everything seemed spacious, on a large scale, physically and mentally, nothing done by halves, but splendidly open and original, no formality but a certain amount of autocracy and intolerance of stupidity. Mrs. Wemyss, Mimini, and Mary had all charming soft-speaking voices, and Mimini's singing was gloriously beautiful; I can hear her

now singing Mary Stuart's lament "*Rendez-moi la patrie*" accompanying herself on the pianoforte in the hall, her voice reverberating on its oak panelling and over the dark, polished floor, she herself wearing crimson plush and looking magnificently beautiful. I never met Rosy there, alas! but often later at Hinchingbrooke and at Lady Alfred Paget's, etc.

Mimini was the moving spirit at Wemyss; she started a small pottery factory, painting the designs herself, and she also made a very interesting seed garden of old-fashioned flowers and herbs and distilled sweet waters from them. Everything Mimini undertook she did with wonderfully good, natural taste and a curious mixture of simplicity and largeness, almost barbarity in some ways. Mary was not talented but beautiful and large-hearted, full of vigorous enjoyment. . . . My mother and I loved our visits to Wemyss, and Mrs. Wemyss, both there and at the Clock House on Chelsea Embankment, was a wonderfully charming hostess to all those she liked; she had the real gift of humour, spoken in a gentle voice and with a funny little lift of a nostril. She always walked with her hands behind her and I have often noticed that Rosy did so too.

After her husband's death Mrs. Wemyss left 6 Buckingham Gate and settled in Princes Gate, and her family's recollections often went back to the Horticultural Gardens, the scene of their childish games, and Kensington Gardens, so full of family memories. It was from there that Rosy first went to school at George Hart's, Hereford Square, and later on to his preparatory school.

His schoolfellow, Esme Howard, now Lord Howard of Penrith, relates what was to be the beginning of a long friendship:

"We entered together in 1873, if I remember rightly, the preparatory school at Farnborough which was then kept by the Rev. A. H. A. Morton. Rosy and I were good friends from the first. He rather took me under his wing because my third brother Mowbray Howard was a friend of his family and used to go and stay with them in Scotland. I

therefore remember him better than almost any of the other boys at the school. I don't think I ever knew any man who changed so little from his school days. He was from the first keen both about work and play, but what I remember best was his keen enjoyment of anything humorous and his great love of fun, which made him naturally a general favourite. He also had a keenly critical side to his nature even in those days.

I well remember one Sunday when we were all out in our Eton jackets and top hats. He and I were walking together when suddenly our revered Head Master clasped his hands ecstatically and exclaimed: "In what other school in England would you see the sons of three Cabinet Ministers walking together?" Another small boy might have been impressed, not so Rosy, who at once whispered to me: "Did you ever hear such an old snob?" It was the first time I think that I ever came across snobbishness in the flesh and it made a great impression on me.

He passed, I believe, very well into the *Britannia*, and I think we duly got our half holiday to celebrate the occasion. From that time we only met on rare occasions when the ship he was serving on happened to come near the capital in which I was serving as a diplomat. I remember particularly meeting him in Crete in 1905 when he was commanding a cruiser and I was Consul-General, and he took me on his ship on one or two voyages round the island. Later again we met the day after he had signed the Armistice, and we travelled back together from Paris to London.

But whether he was a small boy at school or a commander of a ship or an admiral and first Sea Lord, he was always the same, a joyous and sunny nature and a warm friend. I cannot imagine his having ever made an enemy.

As he had been as a boy, so he was to remain to the day of his death: happy and gay, with a keen sense of humour, marvellous powers of enjoyment, kindly in thought, word and deed, with high principles, a lofty ideal of duty and unbounded faith in human nature. Thus he was to go forth into the world, one of those who "Bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things."

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS IN THE NAVY

ROSY WEMYSS joined the *Britannia* in 1877, very nearly failing to do so on account of his defective eyesight. By a lucky chance, the doctor who was making the examination happened to have been shipmates with his father, Hay Wemyss, and, realizing who he was, put him through an easy test.

Amongst the forty-eight cadets who entered that term, which included Prince Albert Victor and Prince George (his present Majesty), he passed in as No. 18, and soon was as popular as he had been at his school. He did not indulge in games very much, but liked walking and talking, and his unbounded cheerfulness and good temper made him, according to his fellow-cadets, the best of pleasant companions. One of them, now Admiral Sir Heathcote Grant, writes of him:

Rosy was a very cheery and popular boy, ready for any kind of mischief common to the cadet, but never got into real trouble with the authorities and ended in his last term in the *Britannia* by becoming one of the two chief Captains of Cadets or head boy. He made an excellent Chief Captain and looked after the junior cadets and was strongly opposed to any bullying of the youngsters by their elders.

His special chums in the *Britannia* were Francis Osborne, Ch. Cust, Ch. Dormer and probably myself, and he was also a special friend of Prince Eddy as we called him and Prince George, and his friendship with the latter lasted I think during his life.

He passed out in July 1879, having done very well and obtained a second class in Mathematics and firsts in Extra Subjects and in Seamanship, while his abilities were noted as "very good" and his conduct as "exemplary." He also gained ten months' promotion out of a possible twelve, by which he became a Midshipman two months after leaving

the *Britannia* on September 23rd. But before then, on July 25th, he had been appointed to H.M.S. *Bacchante*, in which the two Princes were, to cruise round the world, while the other naval cadets were Lord Francis Osborne, Hon. George Hardinge, and George Hillyard.

H.M.S. *Bacchante* was commanded by Lord Charles Scott, and it was at Cowes on August 6th 1879 that Rosy Wemyss joined her, the two Princes, brought down by their parents, the Prince and Princess of Wales, arriving on September 18th.

After a short cruise in the Mediterranean, Madeira and the Canary Islands were the next places touched at before reaching Barbadoes, which they did on Christmas Day, anchoring in Carlisle Bay off Bridgetown, when they were immediately surrounded by swarms of shore-boats with grinning, laughing negro washerwomen—their first glimpse of the tropics.

The West Indies in all their glory were a veritable revelation to a boy who had never been out of England and who had so vivid an imagination and so keen an appreciation of everything beautiful. The negroes, the magnificent scenery, the marvellous vegetation, the humming-birds, the fire-flies, all produced an impression on him never to be effaced.

Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Martinique, Dominica, Jamaica, Bermuda were visited in turn, and the presence of the two Princes ensured them everywhere a wonderful reception; governors, authorities, all the notabilities of the islands vied with one another in arranging excursions, dinners, and balls, where amongst the gayest of the gay was ever Rosy Wemyss. It was with pleasure he always looked back on those times, and many and merry were the reminiscences he and his shipmates indulged in. Canon Dalton never ceased chaffing him about an incident at a West Indian ball, where strange beasties attracted by the light

were flying about, and Rosy's solicitous offer to take off one from a rather *décolletée* lady was not appreciated by her, as the object he sought to remove was a mole.

The Rev. John Dalton, as he then was, was tutor to the Princes, chaplain of the ship, and also imparted knowledge to the other midshipmen. He finally became Canon of Windsor, and Rosy Wemyss never to the last failed to go and visit him whenever he went there; he lived to over ninety, and even when his former pupil had risen to be First Sea Lord and Admiral of the Fleet the aged Canon was still somewhat inclined to treat him as if he were a young cadet.

In May the *Bacchante* was back in England and in July cruising with the combined Channel and Reserve Squadron, which enabled the boys to meet many of their old shipmates from the *Britannia*. In autumn she started for South America, now forming part of the Detached Squadron under the command of Lord Clanwilliam, in whose flagship H.M.S. *Inconstant* Prince Louis of Battenberg was one of the officers. On November 29th, after divisions, they crossed the Line with all the usual and time-honoured ceremonies of King Neptune's court, etc.

On December 23rd Monte Video was reached, and it was during a visit to the Argentine that Rosy Wemyss was to meet with a somewhat serious accident. One of a party, comprising Prince Albert Victor, Prince George, and Prince Louis of Battenberg, entertained by Mr. David Shehan on his Estancia Negretti, a game of polo was started on horses from the estancia and Rosy was heavily thrown, sustaining concussion of the brain, from which he luckily soon recovered.

On January 9th 1881 the squadron left for the Falkland Islands. On the previous night the British Minister, shortly before engaged to the beautiful daughter of the Consul, gave a ball in their honour, during which a telegram was

handed to him. Whether owing to the confusion caused by the Royal entertainment or mayhap "love's young dream," he slipped it unopened into his pocket, where it lay forgotten. When finally retrieved it was found that it contained urgent orders to the Admiral to leave immediately for South Africa so as to reinforce Sir George Colley's small army, then starting to attack the Boers, with a Naval Brigade. The squadron had sailed, there was no wireless in those days; a gunboat, H.M.S. *Swallow*, was sent in hot pursuit with the telegram, but only caught them up a day after they had reached the Falkland Islands, and though the Admiral started within six hours, by the time they had reached the Cape it was too late. Very shortly after their arrival they heard of Sir George Colley's defeat by the Boers at Laing's Neck and his death at Majuba Hill.

Their stay at Cape Town was saddened by these events; everywhere they were to hear of the colonists' resentment at the recall of the popular Governor, Sir Bartle Frere, whose patriotic far-sightedness, ability, and truthfulness had endeared him to all, and, though loyal to the Queen, of their profound dissatisfaction with the Home Government. They were still at Cape Town when on March 29th General Roberts, after a passage of eighteen days, arrived to take command of the British forces, only to find peace had been signed on March 21st, and had to return to England two days later by the next mail.

On April 9th the squadron left South Africa, the rendezvous being Cape Otway, 6,000 miles away, but the *Bacchante* during a heavy gale met with a mishap, her rudder being smashed by a following sea, and intense anxiety was caused by nothing being heard of her for some time. Great, therefore, was the relief when it was learnt that she had arrived safely at Albany in Western Australia and was lying at anchor in St. George's Sound.

The necessary repairs effected, visits were paid to Adelaide,

Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and finally the Fiji Islands, from where the *Bacchante*, mostly under sail averaging at times one knot, reached Yokohama on October 21st.

Japan had only been opened to foreigners for the last twenty years, so the contrasts presented were at times startling. At a grand military review in honour of the Princes some troops were in European uniform armed with the latest rifles, while others had bows and arrows. Modern receptions and banquets alternated with tournaments in old Japanese armour and costume. The Mikado gave them a splendid reception, while he himself came to lunch in the *Bacchante*; after the official entertainments they spent several weeks longer sightseeing.

Japan was to be for them the Gate of the East, whose gorgeous pageant now unrolled itself in quick succession: Hong Kong and Canton, with its temples and monasteries; Singapore and its curious house decorations and joss shrines, Mohammedan mosques, and Indian temples; Johore with garden- and shooting-parties arranged by the Sultan; Colombo, where Buddhist priests in saffron-coloured robes and yellow silk umbrellas, light-brown Cingalese and Kandians, darker and more manly Tamils, Moormen with crimson caftans and shaven crowns, Portuguese, Jews, Kafirs, Parsees, Dutch and Malays, Englishmen and half-castes, with now and then an aboriginal inhabitant, a Veddah, jostled one another in a strange medley. They visited the temples of Kandy, took part in elephant drives, were introduced to the mysteries of the famous snake-charmers and conjurers, while everyone concurred in trying to make the visit of the future heir to the throne as pleasant and instructive as possible.

After Ceylon—Egypt.

Little did Rosy Wemyss dream, as the *Bacchante* sailed peacefully from Aden to the Gulf of Akabah along the eastern shores of the Red Sea, that the day would come,

thirty-three years later, when he would be called upon to conduct warlike operations in these waters and to bombard these coasts.

On reaching Ismailia they became the guests of the Khedive, who endeavoured in every way and with much success to render the stay of the Princes an agreeable one.

After they had visited Cairo, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and many other places of interest, he placed his yacht, the *Ferouse*, at their disposal to take them up the Nile. Amongst their party, which comprised Rosy Wemyss, was Brugsch Bey, the great excavator, who was going up all the way with them to explain his recent discoveries.

It was thus under the most favourable circumstances possible that they visited all the monuments of ancient Egypt: Thebes, the temples of the Pharaohs, Karnak, the Colossus of Memnon, and many others.

Rosy used often to relate how one evening after dinner, when playing whist, news came to Brugsch Bey that a tomb was being excavated which was hoped might prove to be that of the Pharaoh Rameses which he was keen the Princes should discover. Throwing down their cards, they jumped upon donkeys and raced in the moonlight over the desert, only to realize, after digging hard, that the find was an uninteresting one, but the fun had been the same. They pushed up as far as the first cataract and the Temple of Philae.

After three unforgettable weeks the *Bacchante* sailed from Alexandria on March 26th. But Egypt had cast a spell over Rosy Wemyss which was to remain with him to the end, and each subsequent visit only added to the fascination, so much so that ten years later, when he again found himself there on board the *Undaunted*, he seriously contemplated leaving the Navy and entering the Egyptian Service.

Holy Land and Syria were the next stages, and May found them at Athens, where another series of entertainment was awaiting them.

Notwithstanding the constant round of gaieties and the strenuous sightseeing, the boys had assiduously devoted themselves to their studies, with the result that when the examinations came on at the beginning of July Rosy Wemyss obtained 1,572 marks, and of the five midshipmen heading the long list of midshipmen of the Fleet three belonged to the *Bacchante*.

They were now homeward bound. At Gibraltar they met troopships going out to Egypt, where the Arabi rebellion had broken out, and learnt that Alexandria had been bombarded. After a cruise of 45,000 miles they arrived in England on August 5th, the Prince and Princess of Wales coming to meet them at Swanage Bay, while the Queen, who was at Cowes inspecting troops starting for Egypt, came on board the *Bacchante* to welcome her grandsons.

In less than a year, after serving for a few months on H.M.S. *Northumberland*, Rosy Wemyss was again shipmates with Prince George, this time on board H.M.S. *Canada*, where he was first Senior Midshipman, while the Prince was second Senior Midshipman. The *Canada* was commanded by Captain Durrant and formed part of the North America and West Indies Squadron, so that after joining up at Halifax on August 1st, where the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Edmund Commerell, was flying his flag on H.M.S. *Northampton*, they started for Canada, visiting Newfoundland, the ports of Labrador, and finally Quebec, where at the latter place the Governor-General, the Marquess of Lorne, and Princess Louise, then residing at the Citadel, received them with much kindness and hospitality. It was there that on September 24th, the first day eligible, having on that date completed five years' service, Rosy Wemyss passed his examination for Seamanship, obtaining 960 marks out of a possible 1,000. He was then promoted Sub-Lieutenant and was reappointed to H.M.S. *Canada*.



LIEUTENANT R. E. WEMYSS, 1887

They then proceeded up the St. Lawrence to Montreal amid many public and private demonstrations of loyalty.

Autumn was spent in Bermuda, where Rosy Wemyss was a constant and welcome guest both at Admiralty House and Government House, the latter presided over by General Sir G. and Lady Galway, whose son, now Sir Henry Galway, was always to remain a valued friend, and winter in the West Indies, revisiting all the islands which had left him such pleasant reminiscences during his first voyage in the *Bacchante* and where he enjoyed himself equally this time.

Amongst the happy recollections of this cruise was the friendship he formed with two brother-officers, both slightly his seniors, the Hon. Stanley Colville, Lieutenant, and William Packenham, Sub-Lieutenant, on board the *Canada*, friendships which were to last all his life.

On July 6th he received a telegram summoning him home for his brother Randolph's wedding to Lady Lilian Paulet, only daughter of the Marquess of Winchester, which took place in London on July 28th.

After her son's marriage Mrs. Wemyss left Wemyss Castle and established herself at Torrie House, and it was there and at the Clock House on Chelsea Embankment, which she had built some years previously, that her youngest son spent most of his free time during the following year, while doing his courses at Greenwich College and H.M.S. *Excellent*.

Both at Greenwich and at Portsmouth he met many of his particular friends—Prince George, Charles Cust, Francis Osborne, Heathcoat Grant, Charles Dormer, and others—while making many new ones. H.M.S. *Excellent* was then commanded by Captain John Fisher, and he always gratefully recalled the motherly kindness of Mrs. Fisher towards him and his brother-Sub-Lieutenants, a merry but boisterous crowd who once, at all events, got into real mischief by assaulting the editor of some local rag, with the result

of having all their leave stopped, while several of them, amongst whom Rosy Wemyss, received an Admiralty letter expressing their Lordships' "grave displeasure."

H.M.S. *Hecla*, torpedo depot ship in the Mediterranean, was his next destination. She sailed in November 1885 to join the flag of Lord John Hay, Commander-in-Chief, who, on being appointed First Sea Lord, was succeeded by the Duke of Edinburgh in March 1886—the squadron was then being employed blockading the ports on the coasts of Greece. That summer the *Hecla* was ordered home and took part in the display given at Spithead to Colonials and Indian visitors on July 23rd, attended by the Queen in the Royal yacht. In December she returned to the Mediterranean, and there Rosy Wemyss was to remain till October 1887, having been reappointed to the *Hecla* on his promotion to Lieutenant on March 31st. Malta was very gay in those days, the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, the latter greatly beloved by all naval officers, lending it much animation. To him it ever remained his favourite station, for he loved the climate, the life, the island, its inhabitants English and Maltese, and was never so happy as there.

After two years in the Mediterranean he was appointed to the Royal yacht *Osborne*, commanded successively by Commander the Hon. Assheton Curzon-Howe and Commander the Hon. Hedworth Lambton. The *Osborne* was chiefly employed in carrying various members of the Royal Family, usually the Prince and Princess of Wales and their children, to their various destinations, or in escorting the *Victoria and Albert*. Cowes Week as a rule was a particularly busy time, though the one of 1888 was very quiet owing to the Court mourning for the Emperor Frederick; but in 1889 the presence of the Emperor William, who had just been made Honorary British Admiral of the Fleet, gave it particular brilliancy. It was the first visit of a German emperor to England and, His Majesty arriving on his yacht *Hohenzollern*,

escorted by a long line of German battleships, the occasion was made one of exceptional splendour, naval reviews, banquets, entertainments of every kind following one another in quick succession.

In winter only one lieutenant was expected to be on board, and Rosy Wemyss, as fond of riding as his elder brother, who for years had been Master of the Hounds, first of West Fife, then of the Craven, and eventually the Burton Hounds, took advantage of getting as much hunting as he could; at times with the Blackmore Vale, when he shared lodgings with Lieutenant King Harman of the *Victoria and Albert*; at others in Dorsetshire, staying with another friend his brother-lieutenant on the *Osborne*, the Hon. Gerald Digby, and it was to him he confided his ambitions, for pleasant as his life was, he was beginning to nourish other aspirations. He wanted, as he said, to *do* something—to make a name for himself—and as the Navy at that time did not offer much likelihood of giving him a chance, his only alternative seemed to be standing for Parliament. All his forebears had represented Fife, and he probably would have had every prospect of being elected had he not eventually abandoned the idea. Twenty years later, when, owing to dissensions with the Admiralty, the rumour got about that he was leaving the Navy, a strongly worded appeal reached him, signed amongst others by the most advanced and socialist miners in Fife, begging him to stand as their representative.

In September 1889 he was transferred to H.M.S. *Anson*, the Second in Command of the Channel Fleet, Rear-Admiral Tracey, having applied for him as Flag-Lieutenant.

The Commander-in-Chief was a near relative, his mother's first cousin, whose eldest brother, Sir David Baird, had been guardian to him during his minority. They were grandsons of General Sir David Baird, the hero of Seringapatam, who when quite young had been badly wounded

and taken prisoner, together with other officers, by Hyder Ali, the father of Tippoo Sahib. When the news came to his mother that he was chained to another prisoner, the only remark elicited from the dour old Scotswoman was: "I pity the puir chiel who is chained to my Davie."

Admiral Baird was a character, one of his many idiosyncrasies being never to wear a pair of socks he had not knitted himself; very Scotch in his tastes, especially culinary, constant were the *tête-à-tête* dinners where he regaled his young cousin with haggis (which the latter detested) and other national dishes.

The squadron was on the point of sailing for Elsinore, where prior to the wedding at Athens of the Crown Prince of Greece to Princess Sophie of Germany, one of those family gatherings was taking place which for so long, especially during the lifetime of the Czar Alexander III, played so great a part in promoting a good understanding in Europe. For the Czar, honest, fearless, and strong, having beheld in his younger days all the horrors of the Plevna battle-fields, was imbued not only with the wish for peace but, above all, with the firm determination to uphold and the power to carry it out. His untimely death in 1894 may well be regarded as one of the greatest misfortunes befalling mankind, for had he lived assuredly neither the Russo-Japanese nor the World War would ever have taken place.

In those pleasant informal reunions the great autocrat, before whom millions trembled, for once in a way was able to relax. Wemyss saw him, as strong physically as morally, bend a horseshoe and tear a pack of cards, two feats which greatly impressed him. The Fredensborg gathering was particularly brilliant that year; and the Danish, Russian, and English Royal Families, the latter represented by the Prince and Princess of Wales with Princes Albert Victor and George and the Princesses

Victoria and Maud visited both the *Northumberland* and *Anson*. A few days later at Kiel, whither the squadron had sailed on October 5th, Rosy Wemyss with his Admiral was again to dine with the Czar on board the Russian yacht *Derjava*, when the latter passed through on its way to Berlin. The German Emperor had come to welcome the Channel Squadron, and after much hospitality at Kiel the admirals, with their staffs and all the captains, were entertained at Berlin, the only occasion on which Wemyss ever visited that capital.

In March 1890 he was appointed Lieutenant on board H.M.S. *Undaunted*, a first-class cruiser commanded by Lord Charles Beresford, an old family friend whose genial and delightful personality, added to his brilliant abilities as seaman, made him an ideal commander to serve under. The *Undaunted* was therefore pre-eminently a "happy" ship, and her commission in the Mediterranean one which her officers looked back on with great satisfaction.

To Rosy Wemyss it was to remain memorable as that of his first independent command, Torpedo Boat No. 21—mobilized for the purpose of training in May 1892—an experience he thoroughly enjoyed.

Lord Charles, himself a born leader, was one of the first to realize his Lieutenant's capacities in that respect. He often declared that Wemyss with twenty men could do what another with two hundred would fail to accomplish, thus recognizing his great gift of leadership, due not only to charm of manner and an innate power to command inherited from a long line of ancestors accustomed to wield authority, but above all to his warm human sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men which endeared him to those he came into contact with and made him the idol of the lower deck.

Both Lord Charles and he entered with zest into all the amusements on board; the former pulling stroke at the

regatta in Marmorice Bay while the latter used to bring down the house at ship entertainments by ballet dancing, going through all the steps and motions of a *première danseuse* in the lightest possible manner with his eyeglass firmly fixed. His inherited taste for the stage never left him, and later on, when in the *Empress of India*, he on one occasion at Madeira not only acted but also produced a travesty of "Romeo and Juliet" which he was inordinately proud of.

The *Undaunted* was considered the smartest ship on the station, and when she went home in June 1893 the Commander-in-Chief, Sir George Tyron, paid her a high compliment, the whole Fleet steaming out to cheer ship as each vessel passed the *Undaunted*—a fitting end to a most successful commission. They had hardly got back when they were to hear of the Admiral's tragic end in the collision between the *Victoria* and the *Camperdown* off Tripoli on June 22nd.

After the Mediterranean was to come another spell in the Channel Squadron, this time in the *Empress of India*, flagship of the Second in Command, Rear-Admiral Edward Seymour.

Ever since his sister's marriage to Lord Henry Grosvenor he had spent most of his leave either at Bulwick, her home in Northamptonshire, or in Scotland, where Mrs. Wemyss, having taken a dislike to Torrie House, was now settled at Balfour, a place near Markinch, once the home of Cardinal Beaton. The latter years had not been happy ones for her; her son Randolph, who had inherited neither her business capabilities nor her prudence, had on succeeding to the estate rushed headlong into enterprises which were to end disastrously, so that to her grief she saw the edifice of prosperity which she had so carefully reared crumbling away under her eyes. But worse was to come.

In December 1894 her eldest daughter, who had gone to Eaton Hall for her sister-in-law Lady May Grosvenor's wedding to the Duke of Teck, was suddenly taken ill in the

midst of the marriage festivities and died, after giving birth to her third child. This blow was harder than her mother could bear; she returned to Wemyss Castle, and there, in her old home, was seized with a paralytic stroke from which after lingering for a few weeks she was not to recover, but passed away on February 11th 1895.

Her children's grief was indescribable and was shared by all the people on the estate, so closely identified with her and for whom she had done so much.

Her youngest son, summoned to her death-bed from the coast of Spain, where the Channel Squadron was then cruising, arrived too late, but it was given him to lay her to her last rest.

The vault at East Wemyss Kirk had been closed since the Admiral's death, and Randolph Wemyss had therefore caused part of Chapel Gardens, containing the ruins of a pre-Reformation chapel and situated in a creek on the seashore to be consecrated as a burial-ground; it was there on the morning of October 9th 1895,

* the last of everything was over and we laid her in her resting-place together with my father. The place is lovely—truly "God's Acre." Randolph and Rosy with the Dean and another clergyman left the house here at 3 a.m. and went down to the cemetery at East Wemyss and fetched his body, and then went to the vault in the old Kirk and fetched her, and they got back in front of the house by 4.30 a.m., where we joined them and in the black-greyness of the early autumn with a gale blowing walked down to Chapel Gardens. At the top of the hill twenty bluejackets from the guardship took the coffins off the carriage and carried them down. The dawn of a very stormy day was breaking. In the garden the Dean and choir-boys were waiting and there we lingered till it was light enough for the service to be read. It was all sung and the boys' voices sounded very lovely in that quiet place quite away from all the bustle and stir of the world and with only the

sound of the waves breaking on the beach. Truly I think if we had searched the world over we could not have found a more lovely spot.

His mother's and sister's deaths were a crushing grief to Rosy Wemyss; they were his two great affections, for he had adored them both. To his mother, with whom he had so much in common, he had ever looked up with love and admiration, while with his sister he had shared endless tastes and pursuits. The shock therefore was an overwhelming one, and it was only the realization that the sole antidote to great sorrow is hard work that brought alleviation. He threw himself with redoubled energy into the duties of his profession, which he now gave up all idea of leaving.

In June 1895 the opening of the North Sea-Baltic Canal, long the dream of all Germans and which the Emperor William believed would be the proudest event of his reign, caused a huge gathering of fleets at Kiel. Our Navy was represented by the Channel Squadron, commanded by Vice-Admiral Lord Walter Kerr, while Rear-Admiral Allington had succeeded Rear-Admiral Edward Seymour in the *Empress of India*, where Rosy Wemyss was serving as a Lieutenant. The scene in Kiel Harbour was a brilliant one, for, besides the German Fleet, Austrian, Italian, French, Russian, and U.S. squadrons, Swedish, Norwegian, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, and even Roumanian warships contrasted with innumerable private yachts and vessels of every type, while the town wore a holiday aspect and was gay with decorations. Not only every German sovereign and prince, but members of most of the reigning families of Europe, the Duke of York, the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, the Archduke Karl Stephan of Austria, the Duke of Genoa, and others had assembled at what the Emperor William in a happily worded speech at Hamburg described as

"a symbol of peace." "We are uniting two seas and seas

do not divide but connect. . . . The armoured might which is assembled in Kiel Harbour should at the same time serve as a symbol of peace, of the working together of all civilized people to the advancement and maintenance of Europe's mission of civilization—in peace alone can the world's commerce expand, and in peace alone can it thrive, and peace we shall and will uphold."

On June 20th, in magnificent weather, the Emperor went on board the *Hohenzollern*, which, entering the lock at Brunsbüttel, steamed through the Canal, whose banks were lined with cheering crowds, followed by a long line of vessels conveying sovereigns, princes, all the notabilities, naval, military, and civil, the Reichstag, the diplomatic corps, while at Kiel the greatest excitement prevailed until the emergence of the Imperial yacht heading the procession, with the Emperor standing alone on the bridge in the full-dress uniform of Admiral of the Fleet, his breast glittering with orders and wearing the broad orange ribbon of the Black Eagle, evoked a tremendous outburst of enthusiasm.

Amongst the many entertainments concluding the festivities was a dinner in honour of the Emperor on board Lord Walter Kerr's flagship, the *Royal Sovereign*, when, on proposing the health of the British Fleet, the Emperor referred gracefully to the day when he hoisted his flag as British Admiral of the Fleet and Admiral Allington was his Flag-Captain.

Ten months later Wemyss was again to meet the German Emperor under somewhat different circumstances. He was then First-Lieutenant on board H.M.S. *Astraea*, second-class cruiser in the Mediterranean, which happened to be lying in the harbour of Syracuse, where there was also the Italian flagship *Francesco Morosini*, when on the morning of April 7th 1896, at 6.30 a.m., the *Hohenzollern* having on board the Emperor and Empress, escorted by a large cruiser, came steaming in. It was not long after the Kruger

telegram had roused such indignation in England, and caused such bad feeling between the two countries, so that those on board the *Astraea* were wondering what the Emperor's attitude was likely to be. Between 8 and 9 a.m. he was seen leaving the yacht, and they naturally supposed he was proceeding on board the Italian flagship, when to their surprise they realized he was making for the *Astraea*. It was before divisions, the Captain was below, the men swabbing the decks or otherwise employed, so that before the assembly could be sounded or the crew fallen in, the Emperor, in the uniform of a British Admiral of the Fleet, was on board, exclaiming, "Ha, I have caught you!" delighted evidently to have found them, as he thought, napping, till Wemyss, the only officer there to receive him, tactfully hinted that, as His Majesty, as British Admiral of the Fleet, was doubtless aware, admirals as a rule did not come on board before divisions. The Emperor then laid himself out to be as pleasant as possible, inspected the whole ship, astonished everyone by his technical knowledge, and invited Captain Barry to luncheon on board the *Hohenzollern*.

Wemyss' great desire now was to be appointed to the Royal Yacht, so as to obtain his promotion; according to Admiral Mark Kerr, an old friend and former fellow-cadet on the *Britannia*, then First Lieutenant on H.M.S. *Cambrian*:

I was senior to Rosy, having been to the Royal Yacht as a sub-lieutenant and got promoted early on account of having served in the Naval Brigade in the Egyptian War.

We were fortunate in the *Cambrian* at being at the top of the Fleet in drills, shootings and games and we had 21 cups for these various events in the cupboard on the half-deck. Rosy came on board to see me one day and the following is very typical of his generosity. He said: "I have applied to the Royal Yacht, but I have heard that you are applying, and as the *Cambrian* is the top ship here, you

certainly ought to have it before me." I told him that I had one Royal Yacht promotion and I would certainly not have my name put forward again. I am glad to say he got it and was promoted before I was.

He was appointed Lieutenant in the *Victoria and Albert* on September 2nd 1896. News reached him at Lemnos, an island destined to play a great part during his war career, that he was to relieve Lieutenant Christopher Cradock, just promoted, and who was to perish gloriously commanding his squadron at the Battle of Coronel.

At that time Admiral Fullerton was in command of the *Victoria and Albert*, George Warrender the Commander and the other Lieutenants were the Hon. Robert Boyle and Cecil Hickley.

From his earliest youth Rosy Wemyss had been a devoted admirer of Queen Victoria. On some public occasion when she drove through the streets of London one of his friends coming to the Clock House asked where he was. "Under the wheels of the Queen's carriage," said his mother. "Where else should he be?"

Years had only added to his veneration. It was therefore a great satisfaction to find himself in her immediate entourage, to be present at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897, where not only representatives of the whole Empire but of every foreign country were gathered together to pay homage to the great sovereign who for sixty years had governed her nation with such wisdom and understanding, to hear the thunder of cheers which broke from the assembled multitudes when she drove to Westminster Abbey.

Aged as the Queen was, infirm and almost blind, yet to the very end she inspired the greatest awe in all who approached her, and not even those who had been attached to her for years like Admiral Fullerton dared say her nay. During a rather stormy passage the latter once begged her to allow the port-holes to be closed which the Queen,

always passionately fond of fresh air, refused to do. "But, your Majesty," said the Admiral, "the sea will come in." "The sea will *not* come in," she replied. In view of this King Canute-like attitude there was nothing to be done. The Admiral, however, full of ingenuity, ordered part of the ship's company to lie prone on deck and manipulate the port-holes, closing them as each wave came along, but alas! on one occasion the waves were too much for them and rushing down he found the Queen huddled in an arm-chair with the steward holding up her legs, while the sea was washing the cabin. For once she had been thoroughly frightened.

His duties in the Yacht not being very onerous, Rosy Wemyss took a little house on the Hamble River near Warsash which he called Mainsail Haul and where, hospitable to a degree, his greatest pleasure was to entertain his many friends, one of whom, now Admiral the Hon. Sir Seymour Erskine, relates that:

the first time I went there shortly after he was settled in, my companions and I could not help noticing a lady's hat and parasol on the hall table; as we had been told that he would be alone, we made no remarks, but the explanation was soon forthcoming. Rosy had somehow found out that some of the inhabitants had been unbelieving in his bachelor's establishment and were debating whether they should call or not, so he asked the local curate to tea and exhibited his lure for the curate's consumption. I never heard whether the bait took, but I am afraid that we wished him luck and "good hunting."

With another of his friends, now Admiral Sir E. Alexander-Sinclair, then Flag-Lieutenant to Admiral Sir Michael Culme Seymour at Portsmouth, he shared a Solent one-design yacht, *Margaret*, which they sailed together all summer, so that his two years in the Royal yacht passed very pleasantly till on August 1st 1898 he was promoted to Commander and a year later appointed to H.M.S. *Niobe*,

a first-class cruiser commanded by Captain Winsloe and forming part of the Channel Squadron. The Boer War had just broken out, on October 11th.

**H.M.S. "Niobe," Channel Squadron, Monday, Oct. 16, 1899.* You can imagine how delighted we all were last evening when at 4 o'clock we got a signal telling us to prepare for sea immediately. The Captain went off to see the Admiral and came back with the news that we were going to Gibraltar and Las Palmas and there await orders. It isn't actually the Cape, but it's well on the way there, and I am in hopes we shall go on there. . . . Even if we get no further than Las Palmas it will be something as I expect the transports will keep us pretty busy there, and even that small thing will be better than doing nothing in England. It's extraordinary to think of the mobility of a ship, and the strength to the country it means. There were we last night just going to evening service at 4.15 p.m. and at 6 p.m. we were steaming out to sea, a powerful ship and nearly 700 men! We heard rumours of a British victory on Saturday evening but no confirmation of it, so you can imagine how eagerly we are all waiting to get to Gibraltar and hear some news.

Wednesday evening. Most beautiful weather, and this afternoon we were passing the coast near Lisbon and it looked quite lovely. Close to Cape Roca there is a convent, 800 feet above the sea I should think, right on top of a hill. Passing it from the sea it is quite on the skyline and a little town a few hundred feet below it and then great breakers—lovely—it was like a thing in a drop-scene. We expect to get into Gibraltar at about noon to-morrow and off again next day. It will be rather dreadful being at Las Palmas and seeing all the troopships passing through if we don't go ourselves.

Nov. 3, H.M.S. "Niobe," Las Palmas, Canary Isles. We have been here for a fortnight very nearly. Our news of the war is scanty and comes principally through Spanish sources so that it isn't very reliable, but this latest of two battalions being captured is too awful if it's true, but I can hardly believe it. And here are we all this time lying

* This letter as well as the following were addressed to Lady Constance Butler.

here and doing nothing except cheering the transports as they go through—too disgraceful it is, and when they want every man they can get out there too. . . . The Captain has just sent for me and told me he has received orders to go to the Cape! Hurrah—we shall be off tomorrow I expect. It will be ripping steaming down to the Cape.

Monday, Nov. 20. H.M.S. "Niobe." We're nearly at the Cape now. We hope to arrive there on Saturday and we are all expecting to hear of a big Boer defeat. The whole Army Corps or at any rate two-thirds of it is ahead of us so that I am afraid that we can hardly expect any of our people to be landed. . . . We have just passed a transport with mules—poor brutes, I expect they have a pretty bad time of it at sea, and the horses of the cavalry regiments too. One transport we saw at St. Vincent with a squadron of lancers on board had lost about 20 horses out of 120—a big percentage.

Saturday, Nov. 25th. We have made the land and shall be at anchor by 3 p.m. I hope. Well, in an hour or two we shall know what's been going on and what is to happen to us I suppose. I hope it may be *something* and not fiddling about doing nothing.

Tuesday, Nov. 28. Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope. . . . We arrived here just after a Naval Brigade had landed and on Sunday we got the news of the fight at Graspan. Our men suffered most severely, but thank God behaved with the greatest gallantry and have received the Queen's congratulations. I think I'd do anything in the world for that. I think we are certain either to go up to Kimberley from here or perhaps go round to Durban and take charge of the defences of that place. I don't mind which, but anything to be doing something. There is no doubt but that the authorities are still a little uneasy as to the state of the Colony for all along there has been a very great chance of a general rising, for it is certain that the whole place is a hot-bed of disloyalty. However, the fear of that must get less and less every day, for they have lost their chance. Had they risen at once, on the outbreak of the war, it would have been a real bad business. We have not been able to take advantage of our successes purely I think through the unfitness of the cavalry horses.

Not anybody's fault, but from the fact of their being brought into action so soon after a three weeks' voyage.

All those poor fellows who have been killed in the Naval Brigade were pals of mine—but, after all, it's the best way of coming to one's end, isn't it?

No news has been received from Ladysmith for nearly ten days now. But they are all right I think and Buller should relieve them very soon. The Naval Brigade saved the place. They arrived there with some heavy guns just one hour after the enemy had commenced bombarding the place and got their guns into action immediately, and silenced the Boer artillery. Hedworth Lambton is in command.

His desire for activity was gratified at this juncture by the *Niobe* with some other ships being sent to rescue the transport *Ismore*, which had struck on rocks off Columbine Point north of Table Bay. When she broke up all hands, including a squadron of the 10th Hussars and a battery of R.F.A. had been saved, together with twenty horses. What struck Wemyss most at the time was the helplessness of soldiers as compared to sailors and their apparent incapacity of doing anything for themselves. On this occasion, too, he witnessed what he believed to be unprecedented, namely, a horse trying to commit suicide: the poor animal washed to and fro by the waves deliberately attempting to dash its head against a rock each time it floated by.

Dec. 20, H.M.S. "Niobe," Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope. Here we are again idling about and waiting and all the hard fighting going on so close to one; they won't land us and it really is most trying to the temper. . . . Matters generally have not gone too well for us, and I don't suppose we are likely to have another big fight for some time, until we have many more reinforcements in fact, for so far as I can hear there is no danger of either Ladysmith or Kimberley giving out. The latter indeed is virtually relieved. The old, old story it has been, under-estimating the enemy's force everywhere. . . .

Christmas Day. I have been hearing every kind and sort of story during the last three days about the different engagements but to repeat them would be most wrong, for there is no doubt that nothing one hears is to be thoroughly believed and I am sure that nobody knows anything except some of the Generals and one is beginning to wonder if they know very much. News is kept so dark that it was only known here yesterday that Lord Roberts was coming out just a week after it was officially known in England. I wish to goodness I could get on his staff, but alas! I don't know anyone about him. I am thoroughly disgusted and sick of doing nothing here. However there it is, and seemingly nothing can alter it—but, oh dear, how impatient one gets. I have seen several people from the front lately, most of them come down wounded. Everybody speaks in the highest manner of the gallantry displayed throughout. Thank God.

Jan. 1900. . . . This affair at Spionkop has turned out worse than I even feared—such awfully heavy losses and for nothing! I am in great hopes that when the advance to Bloemfontein begins which I should think it would in a few days' time, that that in itself will relieve Ladysmith. It seems to be the best chance anyhow. Rumour has it to-day that the Boers have left Mafeking altogether. I hope it may turn out true and all praise to those gallant fellows in the place that have been shut there so long and have done so well and so cheerily. Charlie Fitzclarence who has done well there is a cousin of mine; he had his twin brother killed in the *London*, so I do hope he will come out of it all right.

March 3. *H.M.S. "Niobe."* Well, thank God, the tide seems to have turned and although the fighting of course isn't over, I think we may hope for a much better time. Beyond what has actually happened we know nothing here, and I can't find out whether any troops have gone up to the relief of Mafeking. Cronje is now lodged in the Admiral's Quarters in the Flagship here. Of course he don't deserve such good treatment, and I expect had his enemies been any other than English he would have fared very differently. . . . I would have liked to be in London yesterday. It must have been a wonderful sight. But here of course the rejoicings

have been very great and yesterday we dressed ship and fired a salute of 21 guns at noon and played "God Save the Queen." The Boer prisoners who are encamped on shore opposite the ship all came rushing out of their tents to see what was up, and wanted to know whether it was the Queen's or the Prince of Wales' birthday and for a long time wouldn't believe it when they were told that Ladysmith had been relieved and Cronje captured. Most of them still firmly believe that the English will be driven out of South Africa into the sea. Their awakening will be rude.

We were sent up to Walfish Bay, a place on the West Coast the other day to protect the settlement there from a threatened attack. I landed with a hundred and twenty men and three guns and had a capital week building redoubts and mounting guns and digging entrenchments. We were eventually relieved by some artillery, for everybody seems quite determined that this ship shall be left with everybody on board. I suppose it's right, but very sickening all the same. . . .

March 6. We have got about 3,000 prisoners here now, some in transports and some in camp ashore—the latter have much the best time of it. As the details of the fighting around Ladysmith dribble in, one realizes much more what a tremendous hard time they have had and what a big thing it is Buller has done. By the time you get this I am in hopes that Roberts will have had another big victory. Good luck to him and all of them.

March 26. *H.M.S. "Niobe," Cape of Good Hope.* We are expecting to go to St. Helena with Boer prisoners any day. Things have taken a turn haven't they? and isn't Lord Roberts splendid? I expect there will be one more big fight before they get to Pretoria, and then? Will they surrender at once and welcome us as they did at Bloemfontein or will they hold out? Everything may happen in this most surprising war, except seemingly my getting a chance of going to the front. It has been a bitter pill to swallow remaining on board here but we are accustomed to it now, and now too one is not so much wanted. The Ladysmith people were all naturally delighted to get on board again. They were pretty hard pressed and most of all I fancy that hope was beginning to give way and

it's a bad job when that occurs. The bluejackets are dribbling back to their ships and now there are only very few left up at the front and they are at the present with Lord Roberts at Bloemfontein and I suppose will go on to Pretoria. There was a rumour yesterday that some of the Yeomanry had come to grief somewhere but I am in hopes that there is no truth in it as I see no confirmation of it to-day.

April 12. H.M.S. "Niobe," St. Helena. We arrived here two days ago having convoyed five hundred of the Boer prisoners amongst whom were Cronje and that horrible German . . . The latter is an awful brute and actually the other day had the cheek to write officially offering his services to the British Government! This is a most charming island when once you have got up in the hills and the climate perfectly marvellous. It's a sort of perpetual summer and one can see fruit trees all the year round with blossoms and ripe fruit and unripe fruit on them at the same time and all sorts of flowers grow flowering all the year round. A perfect place to have a garden. Of course reminiscences of Napoleon pervade the whole place and his house and tomb are kept as a sort of museum. Not that there is anything in the house except a bust of him. Good heavens! what an ending to such a man. To be confined to an island about 8 miles square and 1,200 miles from the nearest land. I have sent all our midshipmen away for ten days and they are camping out somewhere at the top of an almost inaccessible mountain and having a real good time and its doing them I hope a lot of good.

April 25. Still here at St. Helena and so far as I can see likely to remain. An awful nuisance for one hears practically nothing of the war and we get no mails and send none. They contemplate putting about three thousand prisoners on this island I believe and as the whole of the original population is about two thousand you may imagine the amount of work that there is to be done in the way of landing stores, etc., with very bad facilities. I wish it wasn't such an awful drag from the landing stage place up to the plains. It's about 2,000 feet and so hot doing it. I used to ride, but now conscientiously walk as it must be good for one. We have taken a small cottage close to

Napoleon's tomb where any of us go and stay when off duty. Isn't the Queen a wonderful woman. We have as yet seen no accounts of her reception in Dublin. I do hope it was good. Sure to have been I should think. I really can hardly imagine any Briton not getting a lump in his throat when he sees the Queen.

May 5. H.M.S. "Niobe," St. Helena. Instead of returning to the Cape as we all expected to do we have been ordered to remain here which is not exciting. . . . The Boer prisoners are an extraordinary rabble to look at, but very fine men as a rule and I believe still under the impression that they are going to drive us out of South Africa neck and crop. Cronje himself is not in the camp with the rest of them, he has got a little house of his own, but it's not in half such a nice part of the island as the camp is. That scoundrel . . . is also here and most of those foreigners that were caught about three weeks ago by Lord Methuen. What a tremendous reception the Queen seems to have got in Dublin. I *am* so glad. It must have been wonderful. What a woman she is, it really makes me feel quite wild that I can't go and do something for her. Life is a bit monotonous here and for me is only varied by occasional rows with the soldiers with whom we have to work about the landing of the prisoners, etc.; and they are so slow and impossible and really hinder one in every conceivable way. It's extremely trying to one's temper.

June 4. H.M.S. "Niobe," St. Helena. At last things seem to come to a climax. Our news, however, is very scanty as the telegraph cable is entirely taken up by Government telegrams, and beyond the fact that Pretoria is in our hands we know nothing. We have of course been having great jubulations. Firing salutes, cheering, etc. The Boer prisoners say they don't believe it. That Lord Roberts is in Pretoria yes—but as a prisoner! But I expect most of them will be delighted when it's all over even though they are thoroughly beaten. We are getting very heartily sick and tired of this place. Luckily for us the officers of the militia regiment that is here are a capital sporting lot of fellows, so that they help to make things a little less dull. I think they will get us home as soon as ever they can, as they have never filled up our place in the Channel Squadron and the sooner we get back

the better I shall be pleased. I think I shall give up this appointment when I get home and try and get a command of my own. It's much better fun, though I am very happy here and have a capital lot of officers. Still when one commands a ship, however small, there is a kind of feeling of superiority which doesn't appertain to a Second-in-Command. Our principal job here is to hurry up the passing transports who all seem to think they are on a yachting trip and can take as long as they please about their job and when they are reminded that they are costing the Government goodness only knows how many sovereigns per day, they seem to look upon it as rather a good joke! I must confess that they irritate me. It's dreary, dreary work being here and having done nothing in the war, and when one thinks of what tremendous utility our guns would have been had they been landed one can't help adding every sort of abusive adjective to the Admiral's name. I came out here thinking that perhaps I was going to get the chance of doing something, and I shall return not having even seen a shot fired, and feeling a real good fool. One tries to think of it in the light that the work we have been doing had got to be done by somebody, but that is very poor consolation, and many a ship with not half such good men could have done it all. I had such ripping gun crews all ready to land, and those fellows would have done anything and gone anywhere if only we had been given the chance. Such is luck!

June 10. H.M.S. "Niobe," St. Helena. We are still without details as to the occupation of Pretoria and are all, of course, thinking of nothing else and of what is to happen now. I can't see how they can continue the war with their base in our hands, and I do hope and trust that old Devil Kruger won't escape us. I should think his capture would simplify matters a good deal. I wonder what they will do for Lord Roberts when the war is over; as a matter of fact nothing that they can do will repay the debt that the nation owes him. He is wonderful, isn't he? and one is so awfully sorry for him having lost his son, but what a fine death! It's dreadful to think of the friends that one has lost in the war, and everybody is the same I suppose, but still one oughtn't to mind, for they have done their work and died the best death that a man

can die, and that should be a consolation to the people they leave behind. . . . The inhabitants of the island are all of them Rip Van Winkles, even the soldiers, and it's the hardest work I know to try and get any energy into them to do anything. Even the soldiers about their duty have fallen into the sleepy ways of the place and as I sometimes have a job of work to do in conjunction with them, the consequence is rows. One man, the Harbour Master, and an ex-naval officer too I am sorry to say, had the cheek to say to me the other day that "I must really get into the St. Helena ways"!! I replied that I was sorry, but I intended the St. Helena people to get into my ways, and to a certain extent I am succeeding, but it's very unsatisfactory work. . . .

July 8. H.M.S. "Niobe." Still at St. Helena. I have just seen a Cape paper in which it is reported that Charlie Cavendish was killed. I do hope it's not true. It is dreadful, every paper one takes up, one sees the death of friends or of friend's friends. And this Chirra business! We have only the vaguest news about it, and I can't believe that half the horrible stories one hears are true, and here one is stuck in this miserable island doing nothing, anxious for news and getting little. What a dull place is St. Helena; luckily we get our letters once a week pretty regularly and if it wasn't for that I really don't know what we should do—cut our throats I expect. Heavens! how bored I am out here—thirteen weeks to-day since we arrived.

August 12. H.M.S. "Niobe," St. Helena. At last we have got definite orders and we shall be back at Plymouth on about 10th or 12th September. I can't tell you how delighted I am at the idea of leaving this place, but all the same there lingers in one's mind a sort of regret at coming home before the war is actually over. I had a sort of wild hope that we might have been sent to China, but it seems that luck isn't in our way, except getting home, which is always nice. But I suppose it's only human that one should chafe at being inactive when there is so much going on all over the world. We are awfully behind here with our news, and all we know is that the King of Italy has been assassinated, that the Duke of Edinburgh is dead and that De Wet is still at large and it seems playing the deuce with our people.

Of Chinese news one can gather little, except that it is a bad business. But we are quite in the dark as to whether all the Ambassadors have been murdered or not. It's a shocking business altogether. May we come well out of it!

They are going to send another two thousand prisoners to this wretched island, so that the ship that relieves us will have the landing of them and their stores and will I suppose have to go through all the fuss and worry with the soldiers that we had to at the commencement of our sojourn here. I don't envy them. Well Hurrah! We shall be back soon now.

The *Niobe* reached Plymouth on September 10th.

How satisfactorily Wemyss had performed his duties is proved by the following letter from his Captain addressed to him on leaving the ship:

. . . I feel how very indifferently I expressed my great obligations to you for all you did in the *Niobe*. . . I have to thank you very much for the state of good order and discipline you kept the ship in, but also the way you carried out the extra jobs put on us at the Cape and St. Helena. I know that often you were very poorly repaid by having to fight the soldiers and civilians who instead of meeting us half-way and digging out to get the job through always threw obstacles in the way and never did a handstir more than they could help. All these bothers and worries you kept to yourself and only once or twice when things were particularly bad came to me. . . .

No sooner had he returned to England than he was sent for by the Duke of York, who told him that he and the Duchess were going on a colonial tour which he asked him to help to organize while coming as Second-in-Command. This tour for some time projected but always postponed had been brought to the front again by the events of 1900. The Australian Colonies, long apart, had at last decided to federate as the Commonwealth of Australia and there was a strong desire that the Duke, as representative of the Queen, should take a leading part and open their first

Parliament. At the same time it was deemed fitting that as the Queen's representative he should seize this opportunity to express England's gratitude for the sympathy and material help afforded by them during the Boer War. This, however, applied equally to the other colonies whose sons had fought as gallantly as those of Australia, and led finally to New Zealand, the Cape of Good Hope, and Canada being included in the tour. Both the Queen and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, then Secretary for the Colonies, took the deepest interest in this Mission, which they considered of the highest importance and Wemyss threw himself into the task of its organization with the utmost zeal and energy, all the more as his deep attachment to the Duke of York inspired him with the determination that there should not be the slightest hitch in any of the arrangements.

As a battleship did not offer sufficient accommodation for the Duke and Duchess and their numerous suite, the *Ophir*, one of the Orient Line's vessels, was chosen and transformed temporarily into one of H.M. ships regularly commissioned with officers, bluejackets, marines and stokers drawn from the active list.

It was in the midst of these preparations that suddenly the rumour, soon officially confirmed, spread from Osborne, that the Queen was ill; the Queen was dangerously ill; the Queen was dying; the Queen was dead! To the generations who for so long had grown up to look upon the Queen as an almost integral part of the nation, the news at first seemed incredible and was followed by an outburst of sorrow such as never had been seen before or since; within an hour there was hardly a man in the streets who had not a black tie or a woman not in mourning.

Wemyss was amongst those who watched the Yacht *Alberta* under the lowering wintry sky glide over the cold grey waters of the Solent which for many years had seemed so particularly associated with her now crossing them for

the last time; he saw when nearing Portsmouth a ray of the setting sun burst through the dark clouds and light up the coffin on the deck and dimly felt, as did so many amidst those hushed crowds, that he was witnessing not only the passing of a great sovereign but that of an era—an era of unequalled glory, power and prosperity.

CHAPTER III

H.M.S. *OPHIR*—OSBORNE COLLEGE— H.M.S. *SUFFOLK*

THE general feeling, on the announcement of the Queen's death, was that the projected tour would have to be cancelled, but after many discussions the Government finally came to the conclusion that, considering the great disappointment this would cause in the Colonies, it would be advisable to carry out the plan, all the more that the Queen had taken such a deep interest and had attached so great an importance to it.

The preparations, momentarily suspended, were therefore resumed, and on March 15th the *Ophir* was lying in Portsmouth Harbour ready to sail. The officers of the ship were Commodore Winsloe, the former Captain of the *Niobe*, with Wemyss as Second-in-Command; Commander Nelson-Ward; Lieutenants Ruck-Keene, Crichton Maitland, Norton, Hon. H. Meade, Hon. S. Hay; Sub-Lieutenants Wells, Bainbridge, Saurin, and Waterlow; Major Clarke, R.M.; Lieutenants G. Raikes, R.M.A., and H. H. F. Stockley, R.M.L.I.; and Staff-Surgeon R. Hill.

On March 15th the Duke and Duchess of York arrived with a numerous suite comprising Prince Alexander of Teck, Lady Katherine Coke, Lady Mary Lygon, and Hon. Mrs. Derek Keppel in attendance on the Duchess; Lord Wenlock, Lord-in-Waiting and Head of the Household; Colonel Sir A. Bigge, afterwards Lord Stamfordham, Private Secretary; whilst Sir C. Cust and Hon. Derek Keppel were the equerries; the Duke of Roxburghe, Viscount Crichton, Commander Godfrey Faussett, and Colonel Byron the A.D.C.s; Canon Dalton was Chaplain; Sir J. Anderson represented the Colonies; Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, Literature; and the Chevalier de Martino, the marine painter, and Mr. Sydney Hall, Art. The Hon. Sir A.

Lawley, Lord Wenlock's brother, who was taking up the governorship of Western Australia, was also amongst those who were sailing.

The King and Queen, who had arrived at the same time, went on board the *Victoria and Albert*, where the following day, a large luncheon-party with four First Lords of the Admiralty—Earl Northbrook, Earl Spencer, Mr. Goschen and Earl Selborne—the Secretary for the Colonies, Mr. Chamberlain, and many others assembled to wish the Duke and Duchess God-speed. The *Ophir* then sailed at 4 p.m. escorted by the cruisers *Diadem* and *Niobe*.

* *H.M.S. "Ophir."* *At sea between Aden and Colombo. April 6.* We have just left Aden behind and are now steaming along with a smooth sea and a nice breeze on our way to Colombo. So far our trip has been most successful, though for the first day or two, the Duchess was horribly ill, but she has been very plucky and I think enjoying herself very much. Yesterday, at Aden, was the first really very hot day we have had, for we were very lucky in the Red Sea. I had never been to Aden before and I most sincerely hope that fate may never take me there again. I never saw such a place, and the very sight of it was enough to make one perspire. A dull heat, brown everything. At Gibraltar we had one shocking bad day and everything had to be put off, but our reception and send-off from Malta were the two very finest sights I have ever seen. Our literary people on board say that pen and ink can't describe it properly, so you may imagine I can't. Our party on board are extremely pleasant and good-tempered and everything shows signs, I hope and think, of the whole trip being most successful, my only curse being the coaling, which you may imagine makes a fine mess of my beautiful white side. If it were not for that, I should be quite happy and contented with everything. We are to be four days at Colombo, so I am hoping to be able to get away for a couple of them and go up country to Kandy, which I believe is beautiful.

April 14. Colombo. Arrived here on Friday. I find I have too much to do to get away, at which I am awfully

* To Lady Constance Butler.

disappointed. The heat is very great and I shan't be sorry when we are well out of it on our way to Australia.

At sea off W. Coast of W. Australia. At last we have got out of the horrible hot weather that we have been having, and consequently one can sit down and write and do some work with a certain amount of comfort. . . . The hot weather was very trying, and although nobody will own up to it, all tempers were slightly affected, I think, but not half as much as I anticipated. One poor chap died at Singapore, not actually from the heat though I believe he would have lived in cool weather. He died the morning that we were going to sea, so instead of burying him ashore we buried him at sea that evening, and a most beautiful service it was. I think that everybody was a little affected by it. A beautiful band, a perfectly smooth sea and a setting sun as we put the poor fellow overboard, all helped to make it very impressive.

We crossed the Line the other day and went through the same old performance, but on this occasion we came out very strong, and before getting to the business of shaving and ducking, had a sort of allegorical procession, really very good. I had had a car built and painted like a shell, with dolphins, etc., on the bows and in it were seated figures (bluejackets) representing Neptune, Aphrodite, Britannia, Australia and Canada, Britannia in the middle with Australia and Canada at her feet, and Neptune was crowning Britannia. Really it was extremely good and very pretty. They processed up to the Duke and Duchess, who received them with much pomp, and Neptune proceeded to christen the Duchess with a little salt water, and then gave her an illuminated certificate certifying that she had crossed the Line. Then Aphrodite, an enormous blue-jacket, presented her with a bouquet of coral and seaweed. The whole thing was very funny and I was in roars of laughter. Then came the ducking in the bath and the shaving and was commenced by H.R.H., who was promptly ducked and (I hear) cinematographed in the act—so you may perhaps see it all some day.

We arrive at Albany to-morrow where we only stay just long enough to get and send telegrams, and to land Joe Lawley, whom we are very sorry to lose. He is a capital chap.

We had a concert the other night which was a great success and we have another one to-night when I am by way of dancing a sword dance, but I expect that when the time comes I shall find myself very lame!

April 30. We are to arrive at Albany to-night. The concert came off last night and in spite of the ship's rolling I danced. One or two of the men on board here are really extraordinarily talented in various ways and we got up quite good entertainments. I am now trying to organize some tableaux. But it is difficult. . . . We are well out of the heat now and to-day is the first day for a long time we have not seen the sun. I have again missed seeing my tulips and daffodils at Mainsail Haul which is a great disappointment.

H.M.S. "Ophir." At sea between Melbourne and Sydney.

May 19. We have been having a tremendous time of it in Melbourne—functions of every sort and description—amusing, dull, bad and good. The opening of Parliament was itself a wonderful sight and beautifully organized. . . . The Duke and Duchess have quite surpassed themselves and have done it all beautifully. He with great dignity and she with great charm, and the people all fall down and worship. They have gone to Brisbane by train and we are now steaming round to meet them there. I must confess I am getting a little tired of seeing every place *en fête*, and amongst the drawbacks is the fact that it is very difficult to get one's washing done, for the washerwomen, like everybody else, are having a holiday when we are in port. Whilst in Melbourne we threw the ship open to visitors for two days from 1 to 5 p.m. and during those four hours on the first day it was calculated that over 12,000 people came on board, and rather more the second day, and the surprising part is that they knew that they could only see very little, because of course all the cabins, etc., were locked up, otherwise I should think that there would have been little or no furniture left. We have had great luck with our weather—long may it continue so. Lady Katty* and Bridget† are on board with us, only Lady Mary having gone to Brisbane, so last night we danced and had great fun. I have bought a cockatoo which I am trying to teach to talk.

* Lady Katharine Coke.

† Mrs. Derek Keppel.

At present the only results are awful screeches and many bites in the hand, but I suppose that patience will do something eventually. The illuminations in Melbourne were quite beautiful. Whole blocks of buildings entirely lit up with electric light in every sort of colour. There were many triumphal arches which were also illuminated, and the town at night was lovely. The decorations were fine also, but nothing uncommon about them except the profusion. The Australians themselves were highly delighted with the whole thing.

H.M.S. "Ophir." *At sea, Sydney to Auckland. June 9.* We left Sydney two days ago and are now on our way to New Zealand, and with our usual good luck we are having a capital passage. Well, the two big places, Melbourne and Sydney, are done and finished, and I am not at all sorry. . . . An old man who was born in the village at home came for miles to see me. I felt so touched and was so pleased to see him, though he had left Scotland years before I was born. . . . I went up into the Blue Mountains one day to a place called Katoomba, about three hours by train from Sydney. The scenery was beautiful though no peaks to the mountains. One looked across an enormous valley to the hills opposite, a distance of 60 miles, though it appeared hardly half that distance, on account of the extraordinary clearness of the atmosphere. The whole country looked quite blue from the colour of the leaves of the gum-trees, which are rather like the leaves of an olive. Did you ever read a book called "Robbery Under Arms" by Rolf Bolderwood? A delightful book of Australian station life in the days of the bushrangers? I remarked to a man up at Katoomba that some of the places up there reminded me of the book, and he told me that those were the places described. I thought myself so clever to have remarked it until it struck me that it wasn't me that was clever, but the man who wrote the book.

Up to now he had never left the ship, but in New Zealand he was able to get away for a few days and visit the marvellous geysers, hot springs and waterfalls, boiling pools and mud volcanoes which form an extraordinary feature of these regions. He also was present at Rotorua at a great Maori gathering, during which 6,000 natives, most of them

in their ancient costumes, performed weird and magnificent war-dances, rushing in serried ranks towards the Royal stand yelling and gesticulating till suddenly stopped by a sign from their chief. A strange episode was when the wife of one of the Ministers, a Maori chieftainess seated in the Royal stand in all the splendour of an impeccable Parisian toilette was, on beholding her tribe, suddenly seized by a frenzy of excitement, and dashing down put herself at their head and led them past the Duke and Duchess.

H.M.S. "Ophir." Aug. 11. Australia is finished, for which many thanks, and also Mauritius, and we are due at Durban to-morrow night, and I am quite excited as I hope to see Randolph there which will be delightful as I haven't seen him for over two years. We had a tremendous send-off from Fremantle, our last Australian place. It was a good place for a send-off, as we had to steam about half a mile quite close to quays which were thronged with enthusiastic crowds. H.R.H. stood up on the bridge and gave three cheers for Australia. He has a capital voice and it must have been heard by thousands, and how the people did shout!

I didn't manage to get ashore at Mauritius as I was too busy on board and so saw nothing of the island, for which I am sorry.

Simon's Bay. Aug. 21. We got here two days ago, and I have been coaling ever since. How I loathe the very word Coal. It plays the very deuce with the appearance of the ship and I always have so little time to do it in. We leave here the day after to-morrow and get to Quebec on September 15th, and then a good month's peace and then Home. I must say I shall be glad to get home. A most interesting and enjoyable cruise it has been, but I shan't be sorry when it's all over. I am now beginning to wonder if they will promote me on arrival. There are precedents for it and I am in great hopes that they will. The Rubicon is passed when one has attained the exalted rank of Post-Captain, and it's pleasant always to pass that. . . . I missed seeing Randolph at Durban—he had gone home with Chesham. . . . He thinks he will have to come out again in three months' time, and if this is so, I suppose I

shall miss him in England. The few people I have seen here—soldiers mostly—seem to have fallen into a sort of idea that the war is to go on for ever. They don't seem to be able to imagine a state of peace at all. A few, and mostly, I must say, those who generally know what they are talking about, seem to think that another three months must see them out, but we have heard all that so often that I am afraid that I for one am getting a little sceptical. There is no doubt that the Boers in the field are quite irreconcilable, and nothing I believe short of absolute starvation will make them give in. It's not a bright prospect. I hate this place, Simon's Bay; it always brings back to me those bitter months when one was doing nothing and eating one's heart out seeing other people going up to the front. . . .

H.M.S. "Ophir," Halifax. Oct. 10. To-morrow three weeks we shall arrive in England and I am looking forward to it tremendously. T.R.H.s and all their party are living in a train so far as I can make out, but from all accounts seem to be amusing themselves. Poor old Lady Katty could not go as she was too ill, but she has now gone off on a little tour of her own with our doctor to look after her. The ship seems very lonely and dull without them all, but I am getting through a lot of jobs I couldn't possibly have done with all of them on board. We leave here on Monday 21st for St. John's, Newfoundland, and leave there on Friday 25th; we hope to anchor off Portland for the night of Thursday 31st, and to Portsmouth the next day. I hear there are to be great functions there, and the whole of the Channel Fleet are to meet us off the South Coast of Ireland and escort us up the Channel. If only we can get fine weather, it will be a fine sight. We have had most beautiful weather here, and the climate is perfectly delicious—bright, warm and dry. I had meant to have taken a few days' leave and gone to Boston and New York, but at the last moment I found that there was so much to do and so much to see that I didn't go. I have been playing a good deal of golf and after years am really getting better I believe. It is a most fascinating and at the same time a most irritating game.

The party all returns to-morrow week and I shall be very glad to see them. It seems ages and ages to me since we

left England. How glad I was to get away and how glad I shall be to get back.

We had an awful job coaling the other day—1,800 tons of coal did we have to get in and it was raining most of the time—beastly—however I hope I shall never have to get coal in again.

On their return, they were met on October 30th by the Channel Squadron firing salutes and forming a guard on each side, only, unfortunately, the weather was very rough—so rough indeed that when Mr. Kenneth Anderson, the agent of the Orient Line, tried to get on board he fell into the sea and was very nearly drowned.

Having spent the night anchored in the Solent, where the *Victoria and Albert* with the King and Queen had come to meet them, the *Ophir* entered Portsmouth in procession on November 1st and met with a grand and most enthusiastic reception. Before leaving for London next day with the King and Queen, the Duke of York was able to announce to Wemyss his promotion to Post-Captain.

A month later, on December 5th, the Prince and Princess of Wales, as they had now become, were entertained at a luncheon by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, to which the officers of the *Ophir* were equally bidden, when the Prince in an eloquent speech retraced the Colonial Tour which had been so great a success.

It had ended without a hitch from first to last, but there could be no doubt that this achievement was in a great measure due to the Second in Command. For there had been difficulties; a certain amount of friction, misunderstandings, disagreements which had required all his tact, his knowledge of the world and, above all, his imperturbable good temper to overcome. He had done so successfully and in consequence had won golden opinions and was highly spoken of by everyone.

It was undeniably the qualities he had shown on this

occasion which attracted the attention of Sir John Fisher, who, just come to the Admiralty as Second Sea Lord, was on the eve of launching the revised scheme of entry and training of officers which will always be associated with his name, and whose purport lay in forming one common entry for engineers and executive officers and educating both in navigation and engineering knowledge so that all differences of status should disappear. The period of tuition was to be increased from two to four years, and in addition, therefore, to Dartmouth a second college was to be started and it was for this college that Wemyss was selected as Captain.

In December 1902 Lord Selborne announced the new scheme in Parliament.

At its inception it was clear-cut and of limited range, mainly concerned with officers of the executive branch, but as it developed during succeeding months it affected almost the whole Wardroom. The general public was probably intended to carry away the idea which Lord Selborne emphasized by some telling catch-words such as "box of engines" for a warship, that owing to mechanization the future, and indeed the present, executive officer must needs be definitely an engineer and his training so revised that even from the start due weight should be given to that branch. Up to this time the training of executive officers before they went to sea had little altered from the days of sail; the chief subject was still navigation, with a smattering of seamanship, boat-sailing, bends and hitches, and so on.

The new scheme was designed to change this fundamentally. Boys were to be entered from civilian preparatory schools at a much earlier age, between twelve and thirteen, thereby incidentally cutting out the "crammer"; they were to be kept at Naval Colleges fully equipped for giving an elaborate scientific and engineering as well as the literary, historical and mathematical education usually provided in

Public Schools. Another element in the scheme was the unification of the executive and engineering branches and the Marines, forming one corps of officers with common entry and training. Each officer was intended to devote successive periods of his life to learning and practising the activities hitherto normal to these three groups, thereby obtaining an interchangeability of function which the opponents of the scheme stigmatized as turning them into Jacks of all trades and masters of none. This system was then in force in the U.S. Navy but had not been long enough in operation for its practicability to be fully tested.

There were those who were inclined to suspect that one of the unavowed aims Sir John Fisher had in view and which he wished to attain through this unification was the avoidance of the recurrent difficulties in the engineering branch due to the special character of its personnel, which, differing in many respects from those of the executive officers, Marines, surgeons and chaplains, formed a coherent and self-sufficing body of men as much in touch and sympathy with the engineering profession ashore as with their shipmates. This led to an atmosphere of trades-unionism in the engine-room and stokehold which Sir John may well have regarded as a danger for the future and which to avoid he was prepared to sacrifice some or much of the technical efficiency of the existing engineering branch if he could secure his political and social ends by common entry at an early age and subsequent interchangeability of duties.

Whatever his ulterior motives may have been he did not in any case confide them to Wemyss, who, quite content to take the new scheme at its face value and not blind to either its advantages or disadvantages, was prepared to do his utmost to make it a success. For he was convinced that any part which proved unworkable would eliminate itself, while the good would remain. By no means enthusiastic as to the interchangeability plan, he highly approved of

the common entry and training up to the end of the college courses as far as the executive and engineering branches were concerned, for as to the Marines part of the scheme he was always convinced that it would remain a dead letter.

What eventually happened was that the Marines remained unaffected and formed a corps of officers as they always did. The engineers formed a group of specialists entered through Dartmouth or through the direct entry from the Public Schools; in the former it is exactly the same as the executive, the differentiation only occurring when they are earmarked for executive or engineering from the start. It is no longer Sir John Fisher's original scheme, but, as Wemyss foresaw, it works perfectly well.

If, by common consent, Wemyss was an ideal choice as Captain, it must also be said that no appointment could have suited him better or given him greater satisfaction. He had long been of opinion that a revision of the system of naval education was imperative, for however firmly his traditions were rooted in the past, he foresaw the future, and his outlook was decidedly modern and totally devoid of prejudice. To be able, therefore, to train the future Navy in the way he considered it ought to be trained, to imbue the boys with his high ideal of what an officer and gentleman should be, to create, to build up, to organize—here was the chance of a lifetime—a chance he was not slow to take.

It was the first of the many reforms which it was Sir John Fisher's ambition to introduce into the Navy and in consequence he strained every nerve to make it a success. During that year, at any rate, it seemed as if the higher officers of the Admiralty had no thought for anything but education, for the Second Sea Lord whirled them off their feet whether they wished it or not. Those who were present at some of the meetings he called together still look back with amusement to the difficulty with which many of the victims concealed the tepid interest they took in the

proceedings. But they came and concurred, which was all he wanted.

One of his first steps was to appoint Dr. G. A. Ewing, Professor of Engineering at Cambridge, to the newly created post of Director of Education at the Admiralty, combined with that of R.N. College, Greenwich. After that the Public Schools were canvassed to find a suitable Head Master. The choice fell on Dr. C. Ashford, senior Science Master at Harrow, and no happier one could have been made, for he was imbued with the spirit of adventure and ready to enter with enthusiasm into so novel an experiment as that of blending a ship and a Public School.

His first task was to search public and preparatory schools for fitting masters, while the Captain on his side set out to collect a naval staff.

But almost more urgent than all was the selection of a suitable site and buildings to house the new College. A rapid survey ended in the acceptance of part of the grounds and stabling of Osborne House, which the King was only too willing to see turned to this use. The Works Department at the Admiralty requiring longer time to erect the necessary buildings than Sir John Fisher was ready to grant, it was taken out of their hands and placed in those of a civilian contractor under the Board of Works, and, owing to the combined impetus given by Sir John Fisher and Wemyss, the authorities in London and those on the spot, a large hall, dormitories, a mess-room and quarters for the officers seemed to arise as if by magic, while messing accommodation for the cadets as well as class-rooms and laboratories were provided by adapting the existing stables.

The first sod was cut on February 28th by Princess Beatrice and the first building occupied on September 1st. By April and May matters began to take shape—the staff of Osborne to grow—Wemyss had been given a perfectly free hand in its choice, which greatly facilitated his task,

for he was thus able to surround himself with collaborators who were either personal friends or officers of whose capacity he had a high opinion. He chose as his Commander W. L. Ruck-Keene, who had been with him on the *Ophir*, and successfully moved heaven and earth to get Staff Surgeon Robert Hill, another *Ophir* shipmate, back from the North American Station. Staff Paymaster Webb and Engineer Lieutenant Metcalfe also joined early—the latter an engineer full of ideas, which was essential for a man who had to break completely new ground in designing a course of practical and theoretical engineering suitable for boys of twelve and thirteen. With him came Engineer Lieutenant Swift, while Carpenter Lieutenant Mr. Stidston was also among the first to join.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ashford on his side had succeeded in recruiting a number of masters, a difficult task for there were more reasons than one that they should be pioneers by temperament: the work to be done was in itself quite novel; the life to be lived in co-operation with naval officers must be strange to all of them; besides which, as usual, the Treasury would not commit themselves to anything but the vaguest promises and security of tenure seemed doubtful to many—and yet they came. The first were Rev. E. H. Arkwright, Messrs. James Watt, W. M. Poole, R. Netell, E. A. Mercer, T. Strachan, C. H. C. Livesey, K. G. Reid, and W. G. Grace—the latter the son of the great cricketer who, much to everyone's sorrow, died not long afterwards from appendicitis.

No one who knew or knows Osborne and Dartmouth can have any doubt as to how magnificently they fulfilled their mission, nor how great is the debt of gratitude owed to them by the Navy and the country.

Before the College opened the Naval Staff was completed by Lieutenants Eric Fullerton and Bateman Champain, the former Lieutenant of the first term, Captain G. Raikes,

R.M.R., another shipmate from the *Ophir*, the Chaplain the Rev. F. Horan, Assistant-Paymaster Eves, Engineer Sub-Lieutenant Shaw, Surgeon Jameson, Mr. Colwell, Boat-swain Lieutenant, well-known to the Captain from *Victoria and Albert* days, and Gunner Mascull. By September 1st they had all joined up and there followed a strenuous fortnight spent in roughing out the details of the routine to be followed; at the end of that time some seventy-five little boys arrived in their new uniforms and everyone seemed to feel that they were an inconvenient addition to the problems in process of solution, instead of their *raison d'être*. As a matter of fact, the original staff outnumbered the original cadets, so their arrival was not so disturbing as it might have been.

Osborne College was launched; the spirit animating it from the outset is best described in Dr. Ashford's eloquent words:

It is difficult for anyone who lived through the first two years of Osborne's existence to speak with due restraint about the zest and enthusiasm which one and all brought to the common stock. It was of course a great adventure in itself—naval and educational—and great issues were involved. But much of it was a direct inspiration and infection from R. E. Wemyss—anyone who has also shared in other creative tasks will know how much less inspiring they can be with a lesser man as leader. It is common property that he was a born leader of men and that he consciously studied the art which many others succeeded and failed in without taking thought and here was the opportunity of a lifetime. The glow of the fires he lit has been long in dying—much of it still survives at Dartmouth, and even if all had died away, the feat would have been worth while, for it made it possible for naval officers and civilians to work together at high pressure in the utmost amity and good-fellowship, in spite of their totally different upbringing and outlook, and that habit has persisted for thirty years.

And even if one could describe it, it would seem hardly

decent to do so—there are things that involve human emotions which are better left unsaid.

Not only was the staff built up into a united though real body and fired with the greatness of the opportunity, and incidentally made thoroughly happy, with a capacity to receive and incorporate a steady flow of newcomers—but the waves of cadets for whom it was all done profited directly as well as indirectly of this happy enthusiasm for they too caught the infection. If they had been older it might have been masked by the inevitably stern discipline, but at that volatile age discipline soon became a habit which in no way interfered with the joys of life and comradeship and the team spirit became as much a reality as in the *Britannia* but built on a better foundation.

The last few weeks before the opening of the College had been particularly strenuous ones for the Captain.

July 1903. . . . To-day I have been busy hustling these people. As the time goes on I find that these people have not very great ideas of getting things finished and are inclined to think that a day or two does not make much difference and I have to make them think differently, and it isn't always as easy as it sounds. Two of the Lords of the Admiralty and the C.-in-C. came over to-day and looked round the whole place. I think that none of them believed that it would be all ready by Monday, but I know how the whole job is going and I feel confident it will be all right. . . .

Osborne. Aug. 1. . . . The King is expected after 3 p.m. to-morrow. Of course I have to go on board immediately after his arrival. . . .

To-morrow I actually assume command, for up to now I have only been working from the Admiralty, but now I shall have command of the *Racer* as well. All of it is interesting, but of course there is lots and lots to do. . . .

Aug. 4. . . . Oh I *have* been busy. Well it's all over now, thank God, and well over. I have had much to contend with, as a great many people, most of whom should have known better, had been telling the King that there was nothing at Osborne to open. The consequence was that he said that he'd only come privately to see the place.

Now for reasons politic Sir J. Fisher wanted him to open it, and naturally I wanted it to further his wishes. Well, I got him (the King) to come to-day and he was astounded and delighted. So much so, that he said that it was to be put in the papers and recorded in some conspicuous place in the building that he had opened it and named it. I needn't tell you how delighted I am. Of course the whole thing had been a tremendous push, and once or twice I thought I should never be able to bring it off. . . . It may be horrid pride, but I hate the very thought of failure. And now my part of the business is finished for the time; all the remainder of the detail must be done by the Commander, and, good fellow that he is, he will do it right well.

Sept. 9. . . . What a relief it will be when Tuesday comes and I have got the boys safely in. It will be the end of six months' real hard work and then I shall have time to look round, for though I shall still be busy it won't be the tremendous rush it has been. I found Keene all the better for his short holiday. He's had lots of worry and has carried everything out in such a loyal and true way, for I dare say I am sometimes a bit of a trial to him and want the almost impossible, but he gets it done. I certainly have a real first-rate lot of officers—nothing wanting anywhere, and they are all turning out just as I hoped and desired. Truly I have much to be thankful for. . . .

Sept. 15. . . . Such a busy day and most successful. We have all the boys in, safe and sound, and I must say I am delighted with the appearance of them all—nice gentlemanlike boys—every one of them as happy as the day is long. . . . Luckily to-day was beautiful and the place looked charming. The parents that came with their boys were all delighted with the place and buildings and well they may be.

. . . Our first day has been most successful. Everything shaken down into place wonderfully and my large family of seventy-five small boys are a going concern and going well too.

November. . . . Sir John comes to inspect the college officially on Friday and to-morrow we have a batch of Norwegian cadets, whose ship is at Portsmouth, coming over to see the place. I am getting rather sick of these

visits, but the novelty I expect and hope will soon wear off. . . .

. . . When the King of Italy arrives on the 16th I am going to send the cadets over to Portsmouth and they will form a Guard of Honour—rather nice, I think. Sir John is certainly very good and does everything he can (and that everything is a good deal) to help us on.

Nov. 16. . . . The function at Portsmouth to-day went off very successfully except that just as the King (of Italy) landed and inspected the Guard of Honour it was pouring with rain! I was so sorry for the poor little chaps but they didn't seem to mind one bit, and I think enjoyed their day very much in spite of its being very cold. . . .

December. I have just heard from Sir John Fisher that he is going to bring Mr. Balfour over here on Saturday. I have no admiration for him at all—a weak-kneed man I think.

Dec. 15. . . . Our last night here. . . . The cadets are going off to-morrow morning, and if it wasn't that it means coming to you, I should be sorry, for never has a man been better served than I have been, and never has a man been surrounded by such good and loyal officers. To-night they entertained me at a feast and gave me a very fine silver salver with all their names on it. I am delighted and like to think that they were all *really* cordial to me and that the present was accompanied by real good wishes. . . . I send you every sort of good wishes from my officers. I know that in time you will like and appreciate them as I do.

This letter, as well as the preceding ones, were addressed to his fiancée, for since spring he had been engaged to his cousin, Victoria Morier, who, after her father Sir Robert Morier's death, which had taken place when he was Ambassador to the Court of Russia, had lived with her mother in the South of France, at Cannes, and it was there that in the Christmas leave, on December 21st 1903, very quietly owing to Lady Morier's death, which had only occurred a few months previously, their wedding took place—the commencement of nearly thirty years of unalloyed happiness.

When Christmas leave was over Wemyss returned with his bride to Osborne. The beginning of the second term had brought a fresh batch of cadets—more officers and more masters. Building was still in progress—indeed, never ceased during their two years' residence, and the place was humming with cheerful activity, while officers, masters, and cadets all seemed to form part of one happy family united in doing their best, and equally keen both for work and for play. But the most indefatigable was ever the Captain; here, there, and everywhere—in the lecture-room, at the workshops at Kingston, on the play-grounds, in the sick bay, his radiant personality diffused courage, hope, and good humour, while no difficulty ever seemed too great not to be overcome, no subject too insignificant not to be attended to.

His care for the cadets was unremitting. While anxious they should receive a thoroughly good general education and professional acquirements, to which he attributed their due value, he sought above all to develop the formation of character and leadership, to encourage the joys of responsibility and the cultivation of will-power and initiative. Constantly reminding them that they were no longer school-boys, but "young officers and gentlemen," he tried to foster their sense of honour. Himself the most courteous of men, he laid the greatest stress on good manners, of which he realized all the importance, while he also saw to their being taught dancing and other accomplishments which he knew would be of assistance to them when, as so often the case with naval officers, they might be called upon to represent their country abroad and to exhibit social and even diplomatic qualities.

Sir John Fisher, who was now C.-in-C. at Portsmouth, lost no opportunity of bringing his new educational scheme before the public, with the result that Osborne was soon overrun with visitors. King Edward was one of the first; most of the Royal Family followed suit and naval officers

and head masters of public schools attracted by the novelty of the experiment, politicians, foreign naval attaches, authors and others—all crowded in course of time into the Captain's diminutive residence, but lately the policeman's cottage which the addition of a bow window had practically doubled. Even London Society began to interest itself in what an enthusiastic if somewhat romantic lady described as a "dear darling derelict moored in a meadow."

Repeated visits to Admiralty House, Portsmouth, where not only Sir John, but also Lady Fisher and her daughters never failed to extend to them the warmest of welcomes; the kind hospitality of Princess Beatrice, their next-door neighbour at Osborne Cottage; farther afield Lady Cowley at Bodwen, Mrs. Godfrey Baring at Cowes, and others all contributed to render their stay a pleasant one, while the end of July brought the pleasures of Goodwood and later on of Cowes week. Easter leave was spent at Cannes and the the summer one at Wemyss.

The second winter, 1904 to 1905, saw the College practically settled down into its normal routine—the novelty was wearing off and Wemyss beginning to think about sea-time. The Russo-Japanese conflict was then raging, and when the incident of the Hull fishermen being shelled by the Russian Fleet seemed to bring this country to the very brink of war, the ensuing scare made him suddenly realize that in case of mobilization he would find himself alone of the active list at Osborne, while all the officers were replaced by dug-outs, a discovery which more than anything else caused him to desire a seagoing command. On his return from Christmas leave, which they again spent at Cannes, he passed much time at the Admiralty, busying himself about the future of the College. It was finally settled that on relinquishing his appointment he was to remain in command of both Osborne and Dartmouth, which he was to supervise from London; the latter to be commanded by

Captain Goodenough, while for the former he had found his ideal successor in Captain E. Alexander-Sinclair, one of his most valued friends, who, he well knew, would carry out the task in the spirit it had been conceived and continue the traditions he had hoped to create.

It was a sad moment when it came to bid farewell to those with whom for the last two years he had worked in such close collaboration, to Dr. Ashford, to his officers and the masters, to all of whom he was bound by ties of friendship; to the College which had been his creation, the little house where he and his wife had been so blissfully happy.

After a few months in London, with frequent visits to the colleges, he was appointed Captain of H.M.S. *Suffolk*, belonging to the Third Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean—"the worst ship in the Navy," so Sir John Fisher laughingly assured Mrs. Wemyss when they later on met at Carlsbad, where they had gone to try and cure Wemyss of persistent sciatica contracted in the damp climate of the Isle of Wight.

He joined H.M.S. *Suffolk* at Phalerum Bay on September 23rd, and proceeded to Lemnos, where the Fleet was assembled for exercises and the C.-in-C., Lord Charles Beresford, received him with open arms and was "charming, most cordial and welcoming, and altogether pleasant." The Cruiser Squadron, commanded by Admiral Lambton, on leave at the time, consisted of the flagship *Leviathan* (Captain Hon. R. Boyle), *Carnarvon* (Sir G. Warrender), *Lancaster* (Captain Tottenham), and *Suffolk*. Delighted to be at sea again, delighted to find so many old friends and shipmates, his next task, an altogether congenial one, was to escort the *Renown* on its way to India with the Prince and Princess of Wales on board, from Genoa to Port Said. At the beginning of November he was back, and was soon after joined by his wife, who was not long in sharing his enthusiasm for Malta.

An arid rock in the Mediterranean, whose importance ever since the days of the Phoenicians has been due to two splendid harbours, it owes its charm to marvellous colouring and the stateliness of its edifices. Valletta, built by the Knights of Malta in the sixteenth century, has changed but little since, and with its fortifications, churches, palaces, and "auberges" framed by the blue Mediterranean presents a scene of almost fantastic beauty when lit up by the rose-red glow of a winter sunset.

They were never tired of exploring all the monuments and relics of the past. The imposing palace of the Grand Masters, still hung with the gorgeous tapestry presented by Louis XIV, and its armoury, the Church of St. John with the chapels of the different "Langues," or nationalities, into which the order was divided, their many "auberges" and the narrow passage where the knights fought their duels and where crosses on the wall still mark the place where combatants had been slain; together they visited the cathedral of Città-Vecchia, the former capital, with all its relics of the Crusades—the cross which preceded Godefroi de Bouillon on his entry into Jerusalem, the trumpet that sounded the surrender of Rhodes; they took long walks in Pembroke Camp, they picnicked at St. Paul's Bay, and soon there was no nook or corner on the island they did not know.

Life was indeed easy and pleasant in those pre-war days at Malta. Living was phenomenally cheap and pleasures simple and easily come by. Nearly everyone could afford a box at the excellent Italian Opera or to enter a pony at the races, an unceasing subject of local interest. The Governor and Lady Mansfield-Clarke entertained at Valletta and at their country palace San Antonio, where, after Sunday luncheon, the guests were taken to see "the cow" popularly supposed to be fed on oranges, the only specimen of its kind on the island, whose inhabitants were restricted to condensed or goats' milk. Admiralty House, under the

C.-in-C. and Lady Charles Beresford, was a constant scene of social gatherings which very much enlivened Malta society, and the spectacle of old Lady Blunt, a local celebrity and great character, with a very red wig and a very painted face, playing musical chairs at the Christmas party, one not easily forgotten. Affectionately known to the whole Navy as "Aunt Fanny," her house at Salonica, during her husband's tenure of the post of Consul-General there, had been a home for all naval officers from C.-in-C.'s down to midshipmen.

Lord Charles Beresford's geniality, high spirits, and good humour made him the life and soul of all entertainments, whilst his unvarying kindness and thoughtfulness, added to his brilliant qualities as leader and seaman, gained him the love and admiration of officers and men alike. He seemed to create an atmosphere of goodwill, peace, and concord, and never had Nelson's ideal of the "band of brothers" been so near realization as it was in the Mediterranean Fleet during his command.

After three happy months Wemyss went off at the beginning of February for combined manoeuvres of the Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Channel Fleets. They left in a violent gale, and as he wrote to his wife (February 11th):

The Admiral made a signal this morning to enquire what damage if any had been caused to all the ships by the sea, and you will be amused to hear that we were the only ship that had absolutely nothing.

Ever since he had taken over he had realized that the strictures passed by Sir John Fisher on the *Suffolk* were by no means unjustified. On his arrival he had found the ship plunged in the deepest gloom, the officers discontented, the men unwilling; moreover, owing to the defects in her engines, the *Suffolk* was constantly in dockyard hands. The latter was evidently beyond his power to remedy, but he immediately set to with a will to try and imbue both

officers and men with a new spirit and to work the ship up to the standard he considered requisite. Regretfully he noted how bad was their shooting, how disappointing the result of the preliminary Battle Practice, of the gun-laying competitions, and he devoted all his energy to try and improve matters—with success—for on February 19th he was able to write:*

This morning all the Fleet drilled against each other and the *Suffolk* was well to the fore, I am glad to say—not at all bad. Next commission I intend she shall always be first.

The rendezvous was at Gibraltar, and they had arrived at Lagos on the 17th.

† A really magnificent sight this huge Fleet coming in—there must be something like 40,000 men in the ships. . . . This afternoon all the Admirals and Captains met on board the flagship—you may imagine the scramble and the number of acquaintances. I saw Prince Louis, who told me that everything was settled about Princess Ena. . . . I don't think from what I hear that either of the two Fleets are so comfortable or well run as ours. Certainly Charlie is an exceedingly pleasant man to serve under.

There was a good deal of dissatisfaction rife in the Navy at that time, for

everybody in the Fleet seems unsettled and everybody hates the way that the Admiralty (or rather Fisher) has of not telling anybody anything. I must say it is extremely annoying and is causing much discontent, which is always a pity and in this case I should think quite unnecessary.

The manoeuvres ended on February 22nd, by the defeat of Lord Charles Beresford and his Fleet supposed to have been caught and annihilated by Admiral Wilson.

Before they broke up Wemyss

sailed round the Fleet, and really it is a magnificent sight, twenty-eight battleships, eighteen big cruisers like

* All letters in this book not otherwise marked were addressed to Mrs. Wemyss, his wife.

† Marriage of Princess Victoria Eugénie of Battenberg to the King of Spain.

this ship and six small cruisers. Bigger fleets of course have been together before, but I doubt if ever one of such strength or homogeneity.

The huge Fleet streaming along was indeed imposing as it covered nearly three square miles of ocean.

On leaving Lagos, the Mediterranean Fleet sailed for Gibraltar and eventually Genoa, which enabled Wemyss to snatch a few days' leave and pay a flying visit to his home at Cannes. The *Suffolk* then parted company with the Fleet and left for England to re-commission. At Gibraltar he went over to Algeciras, where the Conference was then sitting, to dine with Sir W. May, C.-in-C. of the Atlantic Fleet, who is living there in the hotel—there were all the diplomats looking very much bored and old Mackenzie Wallace and the Brasseys. . . . There was an idea at Algeciras yesterday that a critical meeting of the Conference was to have been held there to-day.

This was corroborated a few days later by the C.-in-C. at Plymouth, who told Wemyss on his arrival there on March 30th that there had been considerable misgiving about the Conference and that everything had been ready for war, which at one moment had been almost expected, but now this fear had passed.

While the *Suffolk* was at Devonport he paid hurried visits to Dartmouth and Osborne. Of the latter he wrote on April 3rd:

Everything there seems to be getting along first rate, such a difference to Dartmouth—everything seems to have so much more go and to be so much simpler. . . . This afternoon they were having the sports so that I saw everybody. . . . I also saw Princess Beatrice and Princess Ena, the latter looking perfectly radiant and extremely handsome. . . . Now that the building there is all finished, they are getting the place very nice and tidy and are beginning to plant hedges, etc. It gave me much pleasure going there, though I still find that I am jealous of everybody else having anything to say to the place.

The next day he was in London.

I went to the Admiralty and was practically there all day. I saw Lord Tweedmouth, Sir John Fisher and Drury* and many other smaller fry and had a most interesting conversation with the Director of Naval Intelligence. Everybody was extremely civil and couldn't do—or rather offer—enough for me. I thought Lord Tweedmouth a most pleasant man but he gave me the idea of being much torn between the Fisherites and the anti-Fisherites, and no wonder, considering that he can't possibly know enough of the subject himself to be able to form any sort or kind of an opinion. I said out straight what I thought and kept nothing back. It's no use having opinions if you are to keep them to yourself.

After paying off, the *Suffolk* was re-commissioned on April 8th, and a few days later left for Malta.

From the outset Wemyss had been most favourably impressed by his new Commander, G. Powell. After their very first meeting he had written:

I like what I have seen of him very much—he has plenty of go and is most enthusiastic, which is half the battle . . . from all I hear we shall have a very good lot of officers and men,

an opinion which every succeeding day seemed to confirm. Taking advantage of the beautiful weather to execute various evolutions on the way, he expressed his satisfaction:

April 18. I am delighted with my officers and men—the former appear first rate and the crew seem a fine lot, big and willing, and I see no reason why we should not come right to the top. Powell is a man after my own heart, energetic, able, good-tempered, very keen and very quick and handles the men well. So that everything looks very promising;

and again:

We are hard at work all day drilling, etc., and I have no doubt but that we shall get the ship into a very great

* Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Drury, Second Sea Lord.

state of efficiency. The officers are all keen and energetic and as a natural consequence so are the men.

The *Suffolk* arrived in Malta on April 22nd, but not for long, for the political situation was again giving rise to anxiety, this time in regard to Turkey.

It will be a bad job if we get embroiled with Turkey (he wrote on May 2nd); with our Mahommedan population goodness only knows what the results might be.

Two days later the Fleet was ready to sail, and that afternoon, while playing tennis with the *padre*, a message came to him that they were going to sea at 8 p.m.—five ships and three Admirals, as he noted in his diary. They arrived at Phalerum Bay and there awaited developments and the result of the Ultimatum addressed to the Sultan. On May 9th

Lambton went off in the *Minerva* at full speed to Port Said. From what I gather they seem to think there is at least a possibility of the Turks invading Egypt by the Suez Canal. Personally I think all that nonsense, for two excellent reasons. 1. Commissariat difficulties for the Turks. 2. The Canal could so very easily be defended with small ships and guns, and that is what Lambton has gone down there for. To-day it is said that the Ultimatum expires on the 15th, that is next Tuesday, and we don't even know here what the terms of the Ultimatum are. I shouldn't be surprised if the affair resulted in another Congress. They seem to be the fashion now! The Captain of the *Minerva*, who was down at the frontier when all this happened, told me that such a thing as a boundary line between Turkey and Egypt actually did not exist.

He took advantage of this opportunity to re-visit the Acropolis:

It is such a long time since I was there and what struck me more than anything else are the beautiful proportions of the building. Everything strikes one's eye immediately as being absolutely correct and perfect; they were wonderful people, those old Greeks.

The Ultimatum was to expire on May 15th, but three days previously, just as he was going to bed, a signal came for the *Suffolk* to raise steam immediately and go to Crete, where elections were to take place, and the authorities seemed to dread a general massacre. When, after a sleepless night and vast expenditure of energy and coal, he arrived there next morning, it was to find those whom he had been sent to rescue and who he feared might be already murdered corpses, cheerfully playing tennis.

May 13. Suda Bay, Crete. I arrived here at noon and am awaiting a carriage to take me up to Canea to go and see the Consul-General Esme Howard, with whom I was at school. There are two Russian ships, a French ship and an Italian, all junior to me, so that I am in command of quite an international fleet. . . . So far as I am concerned I am "all on my own" as they say, and so to speak my own master which is always something. The country here is charming just now—masses of wild flowers and there are some beautiful trees in the valleys and magnificent mountains. Altogether a beautiful island and enormously improved since I remember it last.

May 16. Suda Bay. . . . Last night I went up to Canea about five miles from here and dined and stayed the night with Esme Howard and his wife. . . . Howard was very pleasant and told me a lot of amusing stories about the International occupation of this island. Amongst other things that Prince George takes a very exalted view of his position and tries to make himself out an autocratic sovereign. . . . I am off to-morrow with a strange medley of troops on board to land at the South side of the island, all in anticipation of these blessed elections.

May 18. Yesterday I embarked 50 English and 40 Russian troops and took them round to a place on the South side of the island. . . . The government of Crete, indeed the whole Cretan question, seems the most mixed, farcical and ridiculous affair. It is more like comic opera than anything else in real life ever was. Imagine four great Powers, England, France, Russia and Italy—all governing this small island with equal powers. Needless to say that each Consul-General and each Commandant of the various

forces have entirely different views as to what should be done and what should not be done, and the probabilities are, I should say, that each way is wrong. Imagine the jealousies and intrigues that arise, and all for what? to keep each other from occupying the island. I should say let the Cretans alone, allow neither Turkey nor Greece to interfere and let the natives cut each other's throats to their hearts' content. They are certainly not worth the trouble nor the money liberally lavished on them.

May 21. . . . I got to Candia on Saturday and on Sunday morning landed my men as previously arranged, to try and keep order. But a calmer or quieter population or a less excited election I never saw and we had absolutely nothing to do. So this morning I re-embarked the men and am now steaming away towards Athens. . . .

The Sultan in the meanwhile having given in, the Fleet returned to Malta.

It was a fine sight this morning, the Fleet coming in and making fast to the buoys. Only a very few feet between each of us as we swung round and I could have stepped on board the *Carnarvon*.

His satisfaction and pride in his ship were unabated:

We are getting the ship up famously. All the men work well and hard and are I think very happy and contented and I hope really that we shall be right at the top of the list at everything.

And later:

I haven't the slightest doubt but that very shortly we shall be the smartest ship on the station.

And a few days later, arrived at Malta, he wrote triumphantly,

. . . I am sure you will be glad to hear that the *Suffolk* has beaten all previous records of coaling and now stands at the top of the list at that. I think it shows which way the wind is blowing and I am in great hopes of being the same in everything. . . . The news has just arrived of the

attempt on the King and Queen of Spain. What unutterable brutes those anarchists are! What a dreadful shock it must have been for the Queen, and poor Princess Beatrice will also be in an awful state I should think. By God, those people should have *no* mercy and I should be quite pleased to hear that they had been torn to pieces by the mob.

At the beginning of June the Fleet started off on a cruise to Spain ending with combined manoeuvres:

June 19. In the most gorgeous weather we are now steaming down to the southward in the Atlantic ready for some manoeuvres that commence at 8 p.m. to-night. . . . The ship is getting on capitally, she looks so smart and clean now and the men do their work so well, it is quite a pleasure. . . . She steams magnificently and everybody has done very well. It has been a real hard week for many people and they have all proved themselves fit and able—very satisfactory. . . .

July 4. Gibraltar. The C.-in-C. came on board this morning especially to compliment the ship on her good performance.

July 9. . . . Are you really interested in the manoeuvres? If so, you will be pleased to hear that *ours* was the winning side and that the others were driven off the face of the ocean!

The meeting of so many officers was a favourable opportunity to gauge the trend of naval opinion.

July 28. . . . I have come to the conclusion that Sir J. Fisher and his Board are playing the very deuce with the Service. Not in the way of the new Scheme of Entry, for with that I cordially agree, but with his dispositions, appointments and his way of ignoring all precedents and valuable experience. The state of unrest all through the Service is very serious, I can't help thinking. The fact that clever, able and energetic as he (Sir J. F.) is, he is, as we all know, absolutely unscrupulous and the way in which he is blending his own and the Service's interest to the detriment of the latter is now becoming very apparent. I quite allow that he has done an enormous amount of good but alas! I am afraid he is suffering from what the Bluejacket

calls swelled head and having got an enormous (too much) power into his own hands, he has taken the bit between his teeth and nothing seems able to stop him in his mad career of perfectly unnecessary reforms. It is a very serious matter and may become really dangerous. I am extremely sorry that Sir W. May is to go to the Admiralty. I am much afraid that he will only be a puppet in Sir J. F.'s hands.

And again on August 11th:

. . . Naval opinion and comment is tremendously against Fisher and his Board over their allowing the reduction in ship-building. Of course everybody is saying that he is clinging to office. . . .

The Fleet was now on its way back.

July 30. . . . Lambton has gone on to Malta ahead of us, so I shall be in charge of the Cruiser Squadron and we are going to carry out some very interesting manoeuvres on the way which will amuse me very much as I shall be conducting them, which is much more amusing than merely doing what one is told. . . .

An experience repeated a fortnight later.

Aug. 16. At sea between Malta and Trieste. We have been playing at fighting ever since we left Malta, searching for enemies, etc., and when found having great sham battles. All this morning I have had charge of the Fleet, manoeuvring them, which is capital fun. I don't know of any other Admiral who does that with his Captains, more's the pity. . . . The C.-in-C. never loses a chance of doing something. He is the most indefatigable man I ever came across. Extraordinarily active both mentally and bodily for his age, I think his keen interest in everything is one of his great charms. . . .

The Fleet in general and the Squadron in particular were very happy, and deeply did Wemyss regret the changes which were inevitably coming. The first to go was Sir G. Warrender, relieved by Captain de Robeck—who

has been to call on me this morning (Aug. 20th)—he is a very nice fellow but I would prefer G. Warrender still being

out here. His departure leaves me in the proud position of Senior Captain of the Cruisers although all the others are older and longer in the Service than I am—but that doesn't matter as they all are good fellows and friends.

Admiral Lambton's time too was up. . . . I hear that Admiral Barry succeeds Hedworth Lambton in December. I know him very well and we are rather friends. He was my Captain when I was First Lieutenant in the *Astraea* in 1895. . . . I am very much afraid that the C.-in-C. will be giving up about the same time too. I hear that he wants to go to America for a few months before taking command of the Channel Fleet, which it is supposed he is to do in March. There is a rumour that Drury!! is to come. It sounds too absurd for words, but I suppose he has to be rewarded for having been so complaisant to J. F. at the Admiralty for so long. It's rather dreadful to contemplate.

The C.-in-C., with his usual kindness, had given Wemyss a month's leave to join his wife, then expecting her confinement at Lausanne. He arrived there on August 30th and on September 17th their daughter was born.

On his return to Malta:

I found everything on board going swimmingly and everybody a bit the better for the experience of shifting up one place, thanks to my absence.

Moral—The Captain of a ship should always have one month's leave a year! . . . I have just seen the C.-in-C. for a minute—quite charming he was and told me he was so glad that he had been able to give me leave.

Not only that, but, to Wemyss' immense satisfaction he allowed him to take the *Suffolk* up to Cannes in November for his child's christening.

Both he and his wife had been deeply moved by the affectionate interest shown on this occasion by both officers and men of the *Suffolk*, a proof of the attachment they bore to their Captain.

Oct. 7. . . . How charming of the officers to send the child a bowl and spoon. Of course I am touched and quite

delighted. What a delightful thing for her to have in after years. I think a christening cup from a ship splendid. I am quite at a loss how to thank them, it makes me feel quite shy. . . .

Not only had the officers sent a bowl and spoon but the Warrant Officers sent the christening mug and the gun-room an egg-cup and spoon.

The *Suffolk* arrived at Cannes on November 17th, and the christening, which took place a few days later, assumed an almost purely naval aspect—the *Suffolk's* Chaplain, Rev. V. Baker, performed the ceremony, the church was decorated with flags and crowded with delegations from the ship's company which stood godfather, represented by the Commander, who afterwards cut the christening-cake with his sword.

It was the first time for forty years that a man-of-war had come to Cannes, and the sensation created was consequently great and gave rise to many proofs of good will and cordiality on the part of the population. The Mayor and Municipal Council gave them a splendid reception—special trains were run from the neighbouring towns and villages to enable the people to visit the ship thrown open to the public.

After a short cruise to Genoa, Naples, and Sicily the *Suffolk* returned to Malta.

That winter was a particularly severe one; the island was swept by gales and an icy wind howled through the stately halls and vast but unwarmed apartments of the Maltese palaces. Many old friends were gone or going. First and foremost Lord Charles Beresford, who left in January amidst universal manifestations of regret, not only on the part of the Navy, but also the entire English and Maltese population, by whom he was greatly beloved. But, alas! when the Fleet went out for a "shore off" to the C.-in-C., Wemyss was not able to be there. The day before, walking in the dockyard with a brother-officer, Captain Grant, a

board had given way and he had fallen sixty feet into dry Dock No. 4, to the horror of the bystanders persuaded that he must inevitably be killed. What, therefore, was their surprise and relief when he was picked up at the bottom of the dock apparently unhurt, with his uniform in shreds but his eyeglass still firmly fixed in his eye. Very stiff and bruised, he was laid up for several days, while the whole of Malta streamed to his bedside to congratulate him on his miraculous escape.

The ebb and flow of naval life had at that time brought out to Malta many of the old Osborne staff; the Commander, Ruck-Keene, now promoted, was Flag Captain to Admiral Barry, Dr. Hill reigned at Bighi Hospital, Lieutenant Fullerton was on board the flagship, which led to many pleasant reunions and reminiscences.

Rumours had been circulating all the autumn and winter as to the redistribution of ships and fleets.

It is one of the tiresome things of Fisher's administration (so Wemyss had written) that there are always dark hints being promulgated as to possibilities and that everybody consequently has an inevitable feeling of unrest.

It had even been given out that there would be no manoeuvres; this, however, turned out to be incorrect and the Fleet left as usual at the beginning of February.

February 6. . . . A very uninteresting day we have spent—rather dull and no amusing tactics such as we always had in C.B.'s time.

February 10. The battle fleet came in this morning—this afternoon we have another meeting on board the Flagship and it is much required because Admiral May's orders are so badly worded that they are difficult to grasp. What a real blessing is lucidity!

February 11. We left yesterday and are now steaming away into the Atlantic to take up our respective positions ready for the manoeuvres which commence at 8 p.m. to-night.

The *Suffolk* did very well during manoeuvres, "the

admired of all beholders," as she was to be too at Toulon, where, together with the *Lancaster*, she went to escort the *Victoria and Albert*.

April 6. . . . Our people who went to see the *Iena** yesterday told me it was a wonderful sight, the ship was literally riddled and one could see right through her in every direction, an absolute wreck. We are to meet the Fleet at 11 a.m. off Cartagena. The King embarked last night and I suppose that the Queen has arrived this morning. Everybody admires the *Suffolk* enormously and certainly she is looking uncommonly well. The Commander of the *Victoria and Albert* told Powell that he had never known that it was possible to get a grey ship to look like that, an opinion shared by the Frenchmen of whom one Admiral told the Commander that she was the "beau-ideal" of a man-of-war.

April 8. Such a fine sight this morning when the Yacht met the Fleet. We had left early and joined the Admiral before the Yacht passed in between the lines and as she came through all the ships fired a salute and then the King of Spain came out in his yacht and joined up.

That evening there was a State Banquet on board a Spanish man-of-war

most beautifully done. The upper deck had been housed in and it was all hung with gorgeous tapestries—very fine indeed and the dinner was very good.

After Cartagena, the King and Queen paid visits to Malta, Palermo, and Naples, where a meeting took place with the King of Italy, and when the King returned to England, the Queen went on in the yacht to Athens, the *Suffolk* still doing escort. Wemyss thoroughly enjoyed these cruises; he was grateful and touched by the kindness with which the Queen and Princess Victoria invariably treated him and loved seeing new countries and beautiful scenery.

May 3. We left Naples yesterday and came through the Straits of Messina and all the forenoon we have been

* French battleship blown up in Toulon Harbour.

steaming close to the land—Calabria—on our way to Corfu. I can't tell you how beautiful the coast is. Many little villages perched on peaks just like Taormina—all surrounded by lemon groves and acres and acres of red clover and with the sun shining on it all, making the most gorgeous colouring.

Corfu enchanted him by its beauty.

The whole of the hillside is covered with oaks, cypresses, orange and olive trees, with all sorts of beautiful wild flowers. Across the narrow belt of the sea which yesterday was bluer than anything I have ever seen, are the Albanian mountains, whose tops are still covered with snow. . . . I never saw anything I admired as much; looking away from the sea one looks on a most beautiful plain with a small loch in the middle of it and beyond that more beautiful mountains. And all so green and fresh at this time of year. Wisteria was like weeds everywhere—Judas-trees, lilacs, geraniums, roses, irises, in fact every sort of beautiful flower making a perfect orgy of colour. I had no idea Corfu was such a lovely place. I am very sorry to leave here, especially for Athens.

The warm welcome he, as usual, received from the Greek Royal Family made up for the dislike he felt for the Greek capital.

May 14. Athens. . . . I dined at the Palace last night—a large dinner of about 80 people. A decidedly fine room and the table was strewn with rose-leaves—rather pretty. After dinner Prince George, Prince Andrew and I retired behind a window curtain and smoked cigarettes! The whole proceeding had rather an *opera bouffé* appearance. Certainly there is an amusing side to these small Courts. . . .

May 16. Athens. . . . Yesterday we went to Tatoi. Prince George drove us out there in a motor-car. Directly one gets above six miles out of Athens the country changes completely, and is extremely pretty. Tatoi itself is charming. The house rather like an ordinary rather ugly, very comfortable middle-sized country house planted down in the middle of a pine forest through which have been made miles and miles of roads and paths. Some beautiful trees

there are: oaks, pines, arbutus, eucalyptus, a few cedars and ashes, also planes and here and there an elm. The actual garden quite nice, nothing wonderful. In parts of the forest large spaces have been cleared mostly on hillsides and made into vineyards. Occasionally one got lovely views of the far hills and over the sea. Banksias were everywhere in profusion, and on one huge old pine they were growing up and falling down from the high branches quite 60 and 80 feet from the ground. The party consisted of all the Royalties, all the Queen's people, Keppel, one or two officers from the Yacht and myself. We had luncheon outside under some trees and very pleasant it was. I sat next to the Queen of Greece. What an agreeable woman, so simple and pleasant and cordial and hospitable. It is the first time she has made her appearance as she has hurt her knee and can't get about much; on the other side of me was Princess Nicholas, very pretty. . . . Prince George was quite interesting during our drive, telling me a lot about Crete. . . . Of the English officers and men he couldn't say good enough—also the Cretan peasants who he considered had the makings of a very fine race, if properly governed.

On their return, they again landed at Corfu, where the King of Greece gave us luncheon at his villa "Mon Repos," very prettily situated and lovely views. We all met at the Palace in the Town, but as I arrived rather early I ran into him and the Queen, and they took me all over the Palace and showed me what there was to be seen. It had been the Residence of the High Commissioner when the Ionian Islands were British possessions and there still remain pictures of George IV and panels with V.R. on them.

After the Queen (of whom he wrote that "as usual she looks beautiful and about 25—I truly think she gets younger every day") had disembarked at Naples, the *Suffolk* returned to Malta.

At the end of June she was again to sail for the eastern Mediterranean, this time to Alexandria with the Fleet.

Sir Charles Drury was C.-in-C. Prince Louis of Battenberg Second in Command. Admiral Barry, Rear-Admiral of the Cruiser Squadron, in the *Bacchante*.

From Alexandria they left for Limasol in Cyprus and thence to Haiffa. The heat was appalling.

I cannot think what on earth the C.-in-C. brought us to these parts for. I dare say that at another time of the year when less hot one could take an interest in the surroundings but it's too hot now for anything of that sort to be enjoyable.

Yet, notwithstanding, he managed to visit Mount Carmel:

Yesterday we, i.e. Barry, Keene, Heath and myself, drove up Mount Carmel and saw the monastery—the parent House of all the Carmelites. Their chapel is built in a cave supposed to be the cave of Elijah, and I don't see why it shouldn't be as it is apparently the only cave on the mountain. There was an Irish monk who showed us everything—quite a pleasant and well-educated and well-informed man. He was the only English-speaking monk there, and at first was most difficult to understand, I conclude from speaking English so seldom. But as he went along he found his way, so to speak, and gradually one recognized a very broad brogue. I hope he is coming to tea one day and to see the ship. . . . The Germans seem to predominate here. All of Mount Carmel which does not belong to the Carmelites belongs to them, and most prosperous and flourishing do their gardens and vineyards appear. They are a very wonderful people and how the Irish monk hates them, with a most deadly and unchristianlike hatred. I couldn't understand why. I rather think because they possess so much of Mount Carmel, which he seemed to think should entirely belong to his order.

He also visited Acre, the scene of so much fighting and of Napoleon's check by Sidney Smith.

We all went over to Acre in the steamboat. To our horror we were received with a guard of honour, and had to go and call on the Turkish General. It was all the Consul's fault,

who had told him of our visit. We saw all the old fortifications—very strong indeed they must have been; and we could easily map out all the scenes of the various fighting that went on.

On July 14th to 15th they had their inspection, and extremely satisfactory it was—quite first rate. The ship looked absolutely beautiful. Barry had to say that never had he seen a better—all the drills too went like clock-work. I am so pleased for Powell's sake. . . .

The shooting and Battle Practice had also been very good, while the amount of cups and prizes carried off by the *Suffolk* in the various regattas and competitions had earned her the name of the "Treasure Ship." She could therefore be said to have attained that point of perfection which had been both her Captain's and Commander's ambition to obtain.

Unfortunately, however, the trouble with her engines persisted; in spring she had been for several weeks in dockyard hands for defective fire control—now she had to be laid up for two months on account of her boilers. Wemyss therefore decided to go on leave and join his wife and child at Villars in Switzerland. He had suffered greatly from the heat. The mountain air, the long excursions he was able to make, set him up again; later they went to the Italian lakes, which neither of them knew and whose beauties delighted them. When Wemyss, on his return to Malta, found the *Suffolk* still without funnels, he went to meet his wife in Rome. After seeing many old friends and doing much strenuous sightseeing, they went on to Sorrento, to Amalfi, and on November 1st, after a beautiful drive to Torre Annunziata, picked up the Messina train, crowded with acquaintances, chiefly officers of the Rifle Brigade returning from leave. Their Colonel, Colonel Couper, was a very great friend of Wemyss', who had taken him cruising to Alexandria that summer and often

spent pleasant hours with him and his battalion at Pembroke Camp. Quite apart from feelings of friendship, Wemyss strongly held the view that there was never enough co-operation between the Army and the Navy, and whenever he had an opportunity went out of his way to try and bring them together. He constantly took officers out for a cruise, went to their manoeuvres and tried to arrange combined exercises. When the Suffolk Regiment arrived that autumn at Malta he sent the ship's band to play them into barracks, an attention much appreciated, while he sought in every way to encourage the spirit of comradeship between ship and regiment.

It was not before the end of January that he was able to take the *Suffolk* out for a cruise to Plataea and Volo. On his return he had the great satisfaction of seeing the training-ship *Cumberland* come in with the first term of the Osborne Cadets, his own particular "nurselings," and to realize how well they were turning out and how sound had been the foundations of education he had laid.

Otherwise the winter was distinctly dull, and there was no concealing the fact that since Lord Charles Beresford's departure all the life and go seemed to have gone out of the Fleet, while his successor was showing himself inferior to him in every way.

The arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught—H.R.H. having been appointed High Commissioner—created a welcome diversion. They settled in the palace of the Grand Masters, which thereupon assumed new animation; their suite—Lord and Lady Lanesborough, Miss Pelly, Captain Rivers Bulkeley—were a great addition to Malta society, while the Duke and Duchess's unvarying kindness, courtesy, and hospitality soon gained them much popularity.

The day, however, was fast approaching when Wemyss' command of the *Suffolk* was coming to an end and he would

have to part from those with whom for the last two years he had worked in such happy association, for (as Commander Powell was to write many years later) we were all, officers and men alike, devoted to the Captain and he obtained the best from everybody. He had confidence in us and we had confidence in him. The two years in the *Suffolk* were the happiest I have spent in the Service.

A delightful week in Palermo for target practice, another less delightful cruise to the Greek Islands, and then, on his return, a long series of farewell entertainments and leave-takings. His friends on the island were legion, for he had endeared himself to English and Maltese alike; they were full of regrets at his departure and crowded on board on the last day to bid him farewell.

On Monday April 13th, at 9.30, the *Suffolk* slipped anchor and went out from Valletta Harbour, homeward bound, enthusiastically cheered by the whole Fleet.

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[Photo: V. de Buisson, Cannes

R. E. WEMYSS AND HIS LITTLE DAUGHTER IN THE
GARDEN OF VILLA MONBRILLANT, 1909

CHAPTER IV

DISSENSION IN THE NAVY

THE *Suffolk* once paid off, Wemyss took the next train to Cannes. For years he had been looking forward to this, his first real holiday, free from all cares and responsibilities.

What a happy time we shall have in May (he had written to his wife a few weeks previously). I am feeling like I used to feel at school before the beginnings of the holidays and ticking the days off the calendar.

Looking back in after years to this period, it always appeared to him the happiest of his life. Happy in his family, happy in his home, he could recall with justifiable pride all he had achieved within the last few years, the creation of Osborne College, the successful commission of the *Suffolk*, and look forward with confidence to the future which he deemed assured. The appointment he most desired at the time was that of Naval Secretary, Private Secretary to the First Lord. He had, he thought, reliable grounds for believing the matter more or less settled, all the more that, though junior as a Captain, the services he had rendered could well, he was persuaded, entitle him to obtain this post.

It was, therefore, devoid of all preoccupation that he gave himself up to the enchantment of the moment and the glories of the Southern spring. A passionate lover of the beauties of nature, he was never weary of contemplating the marvellous views, the varying tints of the Esterel Mountains, the blue Mediterranean, or of listening to the songs of the nightingales in the orange groves. Sharing all the Wemyss family taste for gardening, he was incessantly planning improvements or laying out new plantations. And thus passed a month of pure delight, at the expiration of which, and after a subsequent cure at Aix-les-Bains, they slowly wended their way back to England.

He had now been away for nearly three years, and those years had brought great changes. Even in the Mediterranean it had been patent for some time that all was not well with the Navy—that the dissatisfaction, the state of unrest engendered by the Fisher regime was becoming more and more serious, but until he actually reached England he was far from realizing how deep was the discontent nor up to what point the Service was torn by bitter animosities.

That the Navy had for far too long been allowed to pursue the even tenor of its ways was Wemyss' firm conviction, and he never doubted but that many of the reforms which Sir J. Fisher had sought to introduce were urgently needed. It was, however, not the reforms themselves which caused the great unrest and discontent then prevailing, but the way they were carried out. In his attempts to remodel the Navy, Sir J. Fisher saw clearly the goal he was striving for, but failed to visualize the intervening difficulties. Instead of realizing that the ultimate success of such sweeping transformations could only be achieved by the hearty co-operation of all concerned and by appealing to the spirit of patriotism and sense of unity of the Service, lacking, moreover, in the ability and patience necessary to overcome the obstacles in the way, he thought to gain his purpose by a ruthless bearing down of all opposition, without any attempt to disarm the natural dislike of a conservative Service.

The result of this mistaken procedure was to turn the large proportion of the profession into active opposition, and the proposed reforms soon became a purely party and personal question. With a deplorable want of knowledge of the world, or even of human nature, he thought, moreover, to compass his ends by launching his new schemes in a series of communications to the Press—a mode most distasteful to what had hitherto prided itself on being called

the Silent Service, suddenly become, to its profound disgust, the target for the shafts of every kind of ignorant criticism, while the flood of controversy thus let loose resulted in the rift between the two schools of thought, widening into a chasm almost impossible to bridge.

Having once tasted the sweets of advertisement and intoxicated by the plaudits of the Press, Sir J. Fisher's ambition soon knew no bounds. Maddened by the want of support and the difficulties he encountered from the greater part of the Navy, he did not scruple ruthlessly to sweep aside leaders whom generations of bluejackets had looked up to and revered and to establish a veritable dictatorship which brooked neither argument nor opposition.

He surrounded himself by a circle of officers, clever and capable no doubt, but who either shared his opinions or subordinated their views to his, while hailing him as a genius, a circle which soon went by the name of the "fish-pond." A dictum was set up that favouritism was the secret of success, a bold dictum at the best of times, but which in this case was to spell chaos. As to the methods employed, Wemyss was soon to discover them by experience.

In an interview with Sir John Fisher, the latter, well aware how much Wemyss desired the post of Naval Secretary, offered it him, adding that such an appointment would be a gross job, since there were many men senior to him who ought to be preferred, while plainly intimating that the price he would have to pay would be absolute subserviency to his views. Wemyss indignantly refused to accept the post under such conditions, though it was the one he most coveted at the time, and from that day on there was no more communication of any sort between the two men, who were only to meet once again, and that by chance, during the war.

That such a proposal should be made at all, that it

should be made to him, of all men, and that by the head of the Service, a Service which hitherto he had looked up to with such respect and devotion, was a moral shock for which his kindly nature, ever ready to believe nothing but good of everybody and everything, and his easy optimism had not prepared him. For the first time he was to realize what unscrupulous ambition and cynical egotism could be hidden beneath the label of the "good of the country" and the "good of the Service."

He had no illusions as to the influence this incident was likely to have on his future. He well knew Sir John Fisher's vindictiveness, his openly proclaimed intention of ruining the professional career of any officer opposed to him, and was persuaded that henceforth he would not only be excluded from all Admiralty appointments but that probably every effort would be made to oust him from the Service. But he had no regrets, for never did he allow personal interest to run counter to the dictates of his conscience.

If eventually he did obtain other appointments it was entirely due to the Second Sea Lord, Admiral Sir F. Bridgeman, who, Second in Command in the Mediterranean under Lord Charles Beresford, had known and appreciated Wemyss and realized his merits.

Private sorrow was soon to be added to his other cares and troubles. His eldest brother Randolph had long been ill, and, a few weeks after his return, had died in London on July 17th; this was a great grief to him. He now, as executor and trustee of his will, found himself all that summer and autumn immersed in business necessitating constant visits to Scotland.

In September he went to Portsmouth for a War Course, and in the following spring, on March 15th 1909, was appointed Captain of H.M.S. *Albion*, a battleship belonging to the Atlantic Fleet, which, as he wrote, does not come up to the old *Suffolk* in any way.

April 17. H.M.S. "Albion." . . . I am thrilled over the Turkish Revolution. The Sultan seems to have it all his own way with the army at his back which apparently prefers autocracy. How he must be laughing up his sleeve and I wonder what the end of it will be. Germany also I should think must be quite pleased and will probably take Turkey into the alliance vice Italy of no longer any use.

April 24. H.M.S. "Albion." . . . To-day the news from Constantinople seems more reassuring and the first crisis appears to be passed. It really is all most bewildering and difficult to follow with any intelligence. . . . The great excitement to-day is the enquiry on the Navy promised by Mr. Asquith. Charlie* seems to have played his cards uncommonly well and has apparently got all he wanted, but we are still in the dark as to the scope of the enquiry, and if it is to be limited and if so to what. I am very glad that there is to be no naval officer on it. That certainly will help to make it free from partisanship, and now all we can hope and pray for is that it will be conducted fairly and squarely with the good of the Navy as its ultimate objective.

The storm in the Service continued to rage with unabated fury; on one side Sir John Fisher and the Admiralty, from which all those who did not see eye to eye with him had been eliminated, on the other the bulk of the seagoing officers headed by Lord Charles Beresford. The antagonism thus created between the Administrative and the Executive was most prejudicial to discipline and to be fraught with far-reaching consequences, while it threatened to shake the very foundations of the Service.

In this struggle Wemyss steadfastly refused to participate; to him the whole situation appeared lamentable—the absolute negation of Nelson's ideal of the Band of Brothers which was also his. Though his sympathies were evidently with Lord Charles Beresford, for whom his affection and admiration had never changed, he yet feared the latter's political activities.

* Lord Charles Beresford.

For Sir John Fisher, having antagonized the greater part of the Service, was now driven to seek outside support, which he found chiefly in the Press and the Radical politicians then in power, while Lord Charles naturally enough tried to enlist the help of the Conservatives. What Wemyss therefore dreaded above all was to see the Navy dragged into the arena of party politics and made a pawn in the political game. Though inheriting the Liberal views which had been traditional in his family for many centuries, he was always ready to give his help to any party as long as it honestly worked for the good of the country and was as absolutely free from political bias as he was from class feeling. To him King or collier were alike, to be measured by the same standard, that of intrinsic worth, while some of his best friends were among the cottagers at Wemyss, whose robust common sense and healthy outlook on life often appeared to him to compare favourably with many of those he was called upon to deal with in higher spheres.

It was, therefore, somewhat of a relief when, on August 20th, after a few months in the *Albion*, he was appointed Commodore in command of R.N. Barracks at Devonport, a place far removed from regions of strife and controversy and where he was able to settle down quietly with his family in the course of the following month.

Devoid of interest as he found his new post, whose monotonous routine was soon to pall upon him, yet at the outset he did not dislike it. The weather that autumn was gloriously fine—the neighbourhood very pleasant—Antony, a beautiful place close by, belonged to his great friends General Sir Reginald and Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew; Mount Edgecumbe was also full of resource—he got plenty of shooting—so that autumn and winter passed agreeably enough, and in February they went to Cannes for their holiday.

The Prince of Wales, whose friendship for him had never wavered, was going with the Princess to South Africa to open the first Parliament of the Union, and Wemyss was greatly pleased when a few days after his arrival in the South of France he received a telegram from H.R.H. asking him to come with him in command of the ship. On his return to England the fitting out of the *Balmoral Castle* at Portsmouth, the frequent visits he had to pay to London, added to his duties at Devonport, kept him fully occupied.

Applications to go in the *Balmoral Castle* (he wrote to his wife, still lingering in the South) continue to arrive in shoals. I wish I could flatter myself that this universal desire arose from a wish to serve under me, but I am afraid that it is the hopes of getting something out of it which is the reason. It looks as though the whole universe wanted to come.

The political situation at that time was giving rise to the gravest anxiety.

April 21. R.N. Barracks, Devonport. . . . The utmost confusion of ideas prevails on the political situation and quite sensible people are beginning to talk of open conflict. I have heard it said more than once that the Constitution won't be allowed to be broken through with so little trouble to the Radicals. In some quarters it is expected that Asquith personally can't keep on . . . what with being hustled by Winston Churchill and Lloyd George, he is gradually getting more and more muddled. They make a great point of the fact that the Estimates have come out so little wrong, but I am sure that is quite a fluke and that the separate items are altogether wrong.

What will the King do? is the question asked on all sides, and now the true idea of his character is showing out, for everybody says, will he be strong? Evidently fearing that he won't be.

But the King was never to be called upon to make a decision.

At the end of April, after one of his numerous journeys

to London, Wemyss was seized by a sharp attack of influenza, recovering rapidly enough to be able to go to London to meet his wife hurrying home from abroad. On the morning after his arrival, on Friday May 6th, he learnt of the King's illness and hastened to Marlborough House for news; in the afternoon there was said to be very little hope—and that night he heard of the King's death.

All the next days he spent at Marlborough House, waiting for orders, helping with telegrams. Everything was quiet, the streets filled with crowds. On Saturday King George held his first Council, and on Sunday Wemyss was to see both the King and Queen and to kiss hands. "The King is wonderful," he noted in his diary.

A.D.C. to the late King, Equerry to King George, attached, moreover, for the funeral to the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, whom he had to meet at Dover, the ensuing week was a continual rush till the termination of the ceremonies which had begun on Monday May 16th by the Private Lying in State at Buckingham Palace, followed the next day by the procession to Westminster Hall—Wemyss walking with the A.D.C.s—where the public Lying in State took place, a marvellous sight, as much by its magnificence as by the reverential attitude of the vast crowds filling the streets. Again was he to take part two days later in the interminable procession when, followed by a glittering throng of sovereigns and princes, representatives of the whole Empire and every foreign nation, the remains of the late King were to wend their way through the dense multitudes which crowded the pavements to the station, lined the railway embankments all the way to Windsor, and thronged the road to the Castle. Bluejackets pulled the gun-carriage with the coffin up the hill, while the entry into St. George's Chapel, the golden pall illuminated by sunshine, the pathetically beautiful vision of Queen Alexandra, whose blue ribbon of the Garter seemed

to render her mourning robes more sombre still, the dazzling blaze of uniforms, against which the figure of President Roosevelt detached itself in Republican simplicity, remained engraved in the memory of all those privileged to have witnessed it.

On the following Sunday Wemyss was back at Devonport, "very pleased to get home."

The day after the funeral the King had told him that the Duke of Connaught was going to South Africa in his stead. They were only to leave in October, so that all that summer he was able to spend quietly at Devonport, with only occasional visits to London, to Clarence House, to make arrangements with the Duke of Connaught, and to the Admiralty, where now, as he remarked, everyone, and especially the Naval Secretary, Captain Troubridge, Sir Charles Drury's former Flag Captain, "was very com-
plaisant."

For Sir John Fisher's reign had since the beginning of the year come to a close, the more immediate cause having been the sensation of the "Bacon Letters." Captain Bacon, a brilliant officer and a strong adherent of Sir John's, had been asked by the latter, when serving in the Mediterranean under Lord Charles Beresford, to keep him informed of all that was going on, a proposal it may be remarked Sir John had equally made to Wemyss, who did not respond. The result had been a series of letters so much appreciated by the First Sea Lord that he had them printed for private circulation; a copy fell into enemy hands, was published in the Press, and roused such deep and general criticism in the Service that Captain Bacon decided to leave the Navy altogether and Sir John Fisher * "passed into the House of Lords loaded with honour but pursued by obloquy," while all those to whom the cause of peace and concord lay at heart heaved a sigh of relief.

* "The World Crisis," by Winston Churchill, Vol. I, p. 76.

In July the King asked Wemyss to come with him to Cowes on board the *Victoria and Albert*, which he greatly enjoyed; from there the Yacht proceeded to Tor Bay, where His Majesty passed an inspection of the Fleet, the first of his reign. Wemyss took this opportunity to go on board H.M.S. *Dreadnought* for target practice, which much interested him. Differing in this respect from the majority of naval officers, he had always been an opponent of the Dreadnought policy, which he considered a reversal of the one so successfully followed hitherto by Great Britain. For up to now we had always allowed other countries to start new designs, trusting to our superior powers of shipbuilding to overtake and improve upon them. The advent of the Dreadnought was to change all this and make the situation of our Navy a very serious one, for, by rendering all existing battleships obsolete, it placed our magnificent Fleet out of date and permitted other countries to make a fresh start and build new ships to a Dreadnought design while placing us on even terms with them. Germany was thus enabled to build her Dreadnought fleet and enter into a race for armaments which otherwise would have been impossible.

Besides, he was strongly of opinion that the way this policy had been written about and boasted of in the Press, and, so to speak, flung like a challenge across the North Sea, was provocative in the extreme and likely further to embitter our relations with Germany, which during the last few years had grown steadily worse.

Questions of foreign policy had always held great interest for him, and all the more as, taking advantage of the leisure afforded by his Devonport appointment, he was then helping his wife to edit the correspondence of her father, Sir Robert Morier. In after-life he often declared how much he owed to the study of these documents which had not only given him a thorough knowledge of the modern history of Germany and Austria but also an insight into the principles

and methods of diplomacy as expounded by one of the masters of the craft whose traditions reached up to the Congress of Vienna and the great Talleyrand. It was the knowledge and insight thus gained added to his great natural gifts which were to make him the brilliant negotiator he was eventually to prove, for it must be remembered that the naval armistice and peace terms drawn up by him have so far been the only ones entirely carried out and never open to discussion.

What interested him, however, at that time, in view of his coming journey to South Africa, was the Lourenço Marques Treaty which Sir Robert Morier had negotiated when Minister at Lisbon, the latter's correspondence with Sir Bartle Frere and everything concerning Cape Colony and the Boer Republics in the late seventies. For the same reason he was delighted to hear all about South Africa from Lord and Lady Selborne, just returned from the Cape, where Lord Selborne had been Governor-General, visiting the C.-in-C. at Plymouth.

On September 19th he motored over to Southampton with his wife, where he commissioned the *Balmoral Castle*, which three days later he brought round to Portsmouth. The C.-in-C., Sir Assheton Curzon Howe, was an old friend, he had been First Lieutenant in the *Bacchante*, and he and Lady Curzon Howe were kindness itself to them during the three weeks they spent there. The great excitement of the moment was the Portuguese Revolution, which had just broken out, all the more as a Portuguese cruiser had been at Portsmouth quite lately whose commanding officer, apparently overflowing with loyal and monarchical sentiments, had almost wept with emotion whenever his King's health was proposed. Great therefore had been the surprise when it transpired that this ship had been the first to point its guns at the royal palace!

On October 11th the Duke and Duchess of Connaught,

with Princess Patricia, and attended by a numerous suite, embarked on board the *Balmoral Castle*, which sailed that afternoon for the Cape escorted by H.M.S. *Duke of Edinburgh*.

The journey began under the most pleasant auspices.

Everything is going nicely and smoothly (he wrote the day after their departure), and all hands are agreeable and ready to make the best of everything.

For the Duke and Duchess he had nothing but praise, and constantly referred in his letters to their "kindness and courtesy," their "thoughtfulness and consideration." The Duke's staff—Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, Col. Cecil Lowther, Captains R. Bulkeley and Grant, Dr. Worthington—he was on excellent terms with and liked very much; at the same time he was

greatly pleased with all the officers—of course those I knew before are all right, but also the others are a particularly nice lot.

He much appreciated the Commander, Stapleton Cotton, while three of the officers, Lieutenants Marriott and Bevan and his Secretary-Paymaster Hugh Miller, were to be on his Staff during the whole war and to remain ever after his most valued friends.

Starting off in somewhat stormy weather, after crossing the Bay they woke up to a

delightful morning, sunshine, smooth sea and a gentle breeze.

Oct. 14. H.M.S. "*Balmoral Castle*." We are abreast of Gibraltar and have been exchanging wireless messages with Queen Amelie. I am so glad the *Victoria and Albert* has been sent for them. At any rate, it shows the world that the King is not afraid to show his sympathy and is dignified. . . .

Oct. 18. . . . For me it has been a very pleasant week and one in which I have done a good deal of work for the book.* Each page indeed, each sentence written, seems

* "Letters and Memoirs of Sir Robert Morier."

with interest, and is all so clearly written that a child could not help but understand. I am trying hard to imbue myself with the style and manage if possible to learn some lessons. . . .

Oct. 22. . . . This morning we have been crossing the Line and playing at Neptune, and I must say a most excellent piece of fooling it was. . . . There is a childishness and simplicity and absolute lack of vulgarity about the bluejacket which really is extremely refreshing. Everybody was much amused and the whole thing went off without a hitch. In the evening it being Trafalgar Day I read them a short lecture and spoke a few words on the subject which I trust were taken in.

They were to stop at St. Helena as the Duke was to invest the Governor, Mr. Henry Galway, with the K.C.M.G.

Oct. 23. . . . We have just got into touch with St. Helena and have heard of the death of Prince Francis of Teck.

Oct. 26. . . . Two days spent at St. Helena which we left last night at 6 p.m. We had arrived there on Monday after two not very pleasant days in the matter of weather. . . . At 12.45 we had the investiture with which I was delighted; it really was extremely well done, and a very pretty sight. We had a dais covered with red cloth on which were two blue leather arm-chairs. Grouped round the dais were all the officers in full dress—a large guard of marines, the band and the ship's company. I headed the procession leading them to the dais, then came Bulkeley carrying the insignia of the order on a beautiful royal blue silk cushion made on board for the occasion; then the Duke and Duchess and remainder of the Staff. Galway was brought in by Hamilton and Grant. The whole of the deck was under an awning covered in with flags and the scene was extremely fine and dignified. I was much pleased with my little stage-managed business.

In the afternoon we all landed and drove up to Napoleon's tomb and Longwood. At the time when I was here—ten years ago—the tomb had been allowed to fall into a shocking state of disrepair, but now the whole thing is extremely well kept and looked after. When we got into the plain

of Longwood it had come on a thick drizzle, so that the impression made on everybody was extremely dreary. I, however, who have often seen it under better circumstances know that it can be beautiful. Nearly 2,000 feet above the sea with a magnificent outline of hills and looking out over the Ocean, on a fine day it is delightful. But on Monday the miserable little house where Napoleon lived looked even more squalid and dreary than usual and the whole party came away full of pity for the man who had lived there six years.

It is a very remarkable fact that there are practically no stories or legends in the Island concerning Napoleon. The Duke got a letter from Minto* just before he left telling him that he (Minto) had visited the island in 1881 with Roberts when he went out on his abortive journey to the Cape after Majuba Hill and that whilst he was talking to the Governor three women passed them and that he had been told to look well at one of them as she was the daughter of Napoleon. Minto goes on to say that he perfectly remembers the fact that he was much struck by the woman's likeness to the pictures and busts of the Emperor and that she must have been about 60 years of age or 90 to-day had she been alive. Now the curious part is that there is no record or legend of this story in the Island.

Oct. 30. A dead calm and alas! a good deal of mist knocking about and no sun. The Admiral wires me from Cape Town that there is much fog in the morning so I am pushing on, and hope to anchor at 4 a.m. and pretend I'm not there. . . .

Oct. 31. Government House, Cape Town. I have had a day. To begin with, last night at eleven p.m. just as I was going to bed we ran into a thick fog which we never got out of until we were actually alongside the wharf this morning. I got up close to the land and anchored at 5 a.m. not knowing for certain where I was. I remained on deck until 6.30 hoping for it to clear up to see where I was, when I turned in never having left the bridge. No sooner had I laid down than I was called to say the fog was clearing. It was cleared enough for me to see where I was, when down it came as thick as ever again. However, I had

* Earl of Minto, b. 1845, d. 1914.

seen enough for me to be able to grope my way to the pier head and in we came, to the *very minute* I had said I would arrive, to the astonishment of everybody and greatly to their joy for they thought that inevitably all arrangements would have to be put off. I had only just had time to jump into a bath and get into full dress to receive all the different big-wigs who came on board, and since then until now (6 p.m.) have never had a minute to myself. First of all the entry into Cape Town, really beautifully decorated, to the Town Hall, where there were addresses, speeches, etc.; all admirable in tone and meaning. Then a sort of triumphal procession through the town to Government House and much-needed luncheon. After luncheon hanging about for an hour and then off with the Duke to go on board ships, etc., and here I am—very tired and rather pleased with myself for having brought them in up to time to keep their engagements, under real difficulties. I am really delightfully lodged in a little house in the garden with a bedroom and a sitting-room and my servant next door.

The Governor-General and Lady Gladstone were charming.

I like the Gladstones very much, they are both agreeable and kindly (he wrote), but some of the Governor-General's Staff are absolutely and completely incompetent and we have had gently but firmly to take matters into our own hands and run the whole business. Now that we have taken these drastic steps, things are going quite smoothly, but Monday and Tuesday morning the chaos was awful.

Nov. 2. Government House, Cape Town. . . . Yesterday we all went by motor to a Government wine farm where there was a huge luncheon under the trees. I was most greatly disappointed because my next-door neighbour was to have been De Wet! But he never turned up. It is an extraordinary atmosphere in which we are living. One finds oneself hobnobbing with people who only a few years ago one would have shot at sight if one had come across them unless they had seen you first and shot you! Last night I took in to dinner the Mayoress of Cape Town, an extremely nice woman who opened out to me and was most interesting. I gather that the Union is really popular from the highest to the lowest and

that they really do confidently look forward to peace and amity. It is possible that it may not come off, but if everything begins in this way and people are really in this mood, it is at least a great send-off and a happy augury for the future. The English people seem to be truly and frankly doing all in their power to make matters smooth and, as the wife of one of the judges said to me yesterday, after all we are *all* Afrikaners and *nearly* almost all loyal to the Empire. The Duke in all his speeches has touched the right note. It is the King that has sent him and he is only doing what the King would wish to do himself but cannot manage to do just now. Hopwood* joined us yesterday and is a great acquisition. . . .

Nov. 3. Government House, Cape Town. . . . Yesterday evening there was an investiture in the ball-room which was extremely well done and the absence of crowd and the quietness with which it was all done made it extremely dignified. This morning we all proceeded down to Simon's Bay by train, where the Duke opened the new dock—a very fine ceremony and extremely well organized. The general remark passed was, how much better things are done when taken in hand by the Navy than when done by anybody else. It is a remark which fills me with pleasure and I must confess is generally true. To-day it was all so beautifully organized that nothing could go wrong and everybody had full instructions where to go and what to do. An excellent luncheon at Admiralty House and a huge garden-party afterwards. I enjoyed myself very much. The women, or at any rate such as I have met out here, are extremely agreeable and talk so well and are full of interest. They all have views which may or may not be correct, but which seem to be always well worth listening to. Botha we have seen little of as he has been seedy. Pleasant he seems to be and agreeable and certainly moderate but a genius or a very strong man I doubt. It is extraordinarily interesting listening to the various sides of the many complex questions with which the situation is fraught. Everybody agrees that tact and quiet are what is wanted, and oddly enough everybody agrees but this is probably what will not obtain. The education question is the first that will arise and is the one which is the most important and requires

* Now Lord Southborough.

the greatest moderation. I should say that so long as the English and Dutch languages are treated fairly and equally the Dutch will very soon (comparatively) disappear and leave the English language supreme. There seems to me to be several reasons for this. The fact of the English-speaking community being the larger of the two being one and another the fact the Dutch as spoken out here is really nothing but a patois and a very debased one at that. Now the Dutchman knows this and from sentimental reasons doesn't wish his "Taal" to be submerged, and is therefore doing his best to give it more favour than the English language, and cannot see that from a world-wide point of view the Dutch language is practically of no use to him. This of course is one of the legacies bequeathed to the present generation by the hedging in of the Boers which your Father tried so hard to prevent. People from Johannesburg, from Pretoria, from Natal, I have had conversations with them all, and whatever else they may differ on, on this question they are all agreed. I feel completely taken hold of by this South African question and am more interested than I can tell you. Yesterday I met Fisher, the Australian Federal Labour Prime Minister, a man with a very remarkable face, full of character, and I should think very strong, a real fighter—but all these qualities seem to me drowned in his supreme arrogance. No arguing of matters with him, no wish on his part to see things from any other point of view than his own, but an ignoring of anybody who holds other opinions than himself. Oddly enough, in spite of my openly differing from him, we got on extremely well together and he jestingly asked me to come to Australia and take command of the new Australian Navy! He comes from Ayrshire. . . . Smuts is a man I met to-day, extremely agreeable but certainly very generally disliked. Perhaps it is because he assumes moderation. This Peninsula of the Cape is certainly a most glorious country. In many ways it resembles the Riviera. Beautiful colouring, lovely flowers and magnificent outlines. . . .

Nov. 6. . . . The opening of the Parliament was really very fine and very well done, very impressive and the speeches all very good. The Duke's reception gets better and better every day and so far as he is concerned I should

certainly pronounce the visit a marked success. On Friday night there was a big full-dress dinner and a reception afterwards. We took charge of the arrangements for the people passing the Duke and Duchess and that was all quite good—but outside! 2,000 people had been asked and absolutely *no* arrangements made at the hall door to regulate the traffic in any way. The Hall is small and bad approaches and the consequences were something awful. Of course we only heard of all this afterwards. Huge crowds jamming and trampling and scrambling. Useless A.D.C.s and distracted secretaries, fainting women and at last some of the crowd actually gained an entrance through the windows. Eventually the Guard was called out and the people kept back at the point of the bayonet. A most disgraceful event, for which these people should surely be punished. The veriest baby would have, I should have thought, taken some steps to keep order and regulate matters.

Then too all the food and drink gave out in the first half hour and all those horrid people did was to laugh and curse alternately. Thank God, it had nothing to do with any of us! Saturday was comparatively quiet—a laying of a foundation stone, etc. But the Pageant! I have as you know never seen one and I went there quite ready to be bored, and I came away quite sure that I have never seen anything so beautiful in my life. In the first place the scene is quite beautiful. The stand is erected down on the sea-shore facing the sea, Table Bay, and all the action takes place on the beach, or really reclaimed beach, with beautiful hills in the distance and away on the right Table Mountain, which in itself is quite magnificent. The Pageant is supposed to represent the history of South Africa from its discovery by Vasco da Gama to the present day. In the finale there were about 6,000 people and at the end they all sang “God Save the King”—and then a patriotic song called Africa and a beautiful Te Deum. It really was quite superb. . . .

This afternoon we went for a motor drive round Table Mountain and ended up by having tea with Botha at Groote Schur, Rhodes’ place, which he left for the use of the Prime Minister. The drive was beautiful and in many places reminded me of the Esterels, glorious hills, beautiful sea

and lovely wild flowers. We must have gone about 100 miles, I should think. Groote Schur is a delightful place in charming gardens, right under Table Mountain with glorious views. It is a modern house built in the Dutch style, very very nice and full of beautiful things, though also some ugly ones. . . . Botha was dining to-night, and so were Merriman and Jameson and it was a very curious sight to see these three men all talking together. I dare say they are used to it by this time but to see them for the first time makes one reflect. Altogether it is a very extraordinary atmosphere in which one moves out here. . . . Here is a story which is absolutely true. When the Portuguese Revolution took place and the Republic was proclaimed, Botha through Gladstone telegraphed to the Colonial Secretary, that he and the remainder of the Ministers could on no account tolerate any small independent Republic at Lourenço Marques!!! Doesn't that speak volumes for the change of attitude and lack of humour! . . .

Nov. 11. In the train, N.W. Rhodesia. . . . We left Cape Town on Monday and with the exception of Wednesday, which we spent in Bloemfontein, we have been travelling ever since and through such wonderful country, some of it not beautiful but some of it quite magnificent. Such distances, such outlines, such colouring and *such* sunsets! All Tuesday was spent in passing through what is called the Great Karoo, practically a desert of scrub, but in the evening we got into mountains again and the colouring, especially at sunset, far surpasses my poor abilities of description. Every colour of the rainbow seemed represented and each in its turn for a few seconds to predominate. We arrived at Bloemfontein on Wednesday morning and there passed the day in the usual manner, viz. addresses, reviews, inspections, large, dull and bad luncheons and finally a garden-party where the whole population appeared apparently down to the street scavengers! We left again at 6 p.m. and have been in the train ever since, passing through Mafeking, Kimberley, etc., and this morning we stopped at Bulawayo, where, by the by, we are to stay for a couple of days on our return journey. We are due at Victoria Falls at 9 a.m. to-morrow morning.

Nov. 13. Government House, Livingstone. . . . The train in which we are travelling is really a marvel of comfort and even

luxury—bathrooms (which are much needed), sitting-rooms, etc., and excellent food. It is of course dusty, but since we travel slowly it is not half as bad as I had expected it to be. Up to now we have been the guests of the S.A. Government, but now that we are in Rhodesia the S.A. Company have taken us on, and to judge by what is being done here they seem to have spared neither money nor thought to make us comfortable. . . . This place, the capital of N.W. Rhodesia, is a little township about 8 miles from the Victoria Falls, and three miles from the nearest point of the Zambesi. We arrived at the Falls yesterday morning at 9 a.m. and proceeded to see them from this, the northern bank of the river. To describe them well is quite an impossible task for me to do. Imagine volumes and volumes of water more than 300 feet high and a mile and quarter broad into a ravine about 80 yards broad. The effect is stupendous. At this time of the year, the river is low and there are many breaks in the actual waterfall. But this I gather is an advantage, for when the river is high the spray from the falling water is such that I believe scarcely anything can be seen. We went right down to the bottom and looking up at them passes all description. When the sun is out the colours in the spray are extraordinary. Photographs, of which of course I have many, are the only possible way of giving you an idea of it. And we haven't by any manner of means seen it all yet. On Tuesday we go to the opposite bank, from which I believe the views are even more gorgeous. This afternoon we have been for a boating picnic on the Zambesi. The whole thing is extraordinary. Only 55 years ago the place had never been seen by a white man—a very few years ago only the railway was pushed here and to-day we went out in electric launches. To add to the extraordinary medley of savagery and civilization, there were real native war canoes brought for our benefit and a Hippopotamus Hunt! and since there was no certainty of seeing any of these animals (and as a matter of fact we did not) the natives had constructed a sham one of basket work. The way these people manage their canoes is wonderful. They are mostly "dug-outs" which, as the name implies, are roughly dug out from a tree. Shape there is little or none but they handle them as if they had been built by White of Cowes. The actual

river-bank scenery I am rather disappointed with, low banks and thickly wooded, but the vegetation is hardly tropical, except here and there, and there are no hills or mountains.

The weather is very hot and by no means unbearable, and the nights comparatively cool. The Administrator, one Wallace, is a particularly nice man. Sensible and strong I should say. The fact of the matter is that in these outposts of civilization one nearly always comes across good men, for here the good old law of the "Survival of the Fittest" I suppose naturally and automatically comes into force. The native police are marvels and it is indeed a source of great pleasure that the Englishman has not yet lost the power of creating good out of the material at hand.

Nov. 14. Tremendous rains last night which have had the excellent effect of cooling the atmosphere considerably and this morning is quite delicious. There has been a parade of the Native Constabulary this morning. They are dressed in short loose khaki knickerbockers, a loose khaki sort of tunic and black fez. Their legs are bare and they *polish* them with some sort of oily polish which makes their skin look almost like patent leather and you can't think how smart they look. The native Paramount Chief with 600 followers has arrived to come and pay his respects to the Duke and they are all encamped some little way off. This morning after the parade the Commissioner for Native Affairs took me down there and showed me all over the camp. Such nice people they seem with the most excellent manners. They greet one with systematic clapping of hands and bowing of heads, which one has to take no notice of, which seems to me such bad manners on our part!

Nov. 18. Government House, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia. I must tell you about our last two days at Livingstone. First of all there was the reception of Lewinika, the Paramount Chief of the Barotse. We all sat on the veranda of Government House and the old Chief came along from the camp followed by his son, Prime Minister (!!) and 600 of his people. They came along the road chanting and clapping their hands, and when they arrived at the gates of Government House they all sat down in the road, except the Chief, the son and Prime Minister, who came to the

steps of the veranda. I had expected and certainly hoped to see a full-fledged warrior with plumes on his head and nothing else on, instead of which a very benevolent looking grey-headed old nigger in most gorgeous clothing, something like a cross between an Admiral and an Ambassador made a very dignified approach up the veranda steps, bowing properly. He made an excellent speech through an interpreter and asked leave to introduce his son and Prime Minister, and then indeed I laughed for up the steps on all fours literally crawled two natives in black frock-coats, stopping occasionally to gently clap their hands, which is apparently the native form of a Royal salute. When they came as close as they were allowed to, they stopped and squatted on their haunches, from which position they are not allowed to move in the Royal presence, but whether on this occasion the Royal presence referred to the Duke or the Chief I wasn't quite able to make out, but I am inclined to think it was the Chief! I couldn't help thinking what a good thing it would be if Mr. Asquith was obliged to approach the King on all fours! The old man presented the Duke with a monkey, rather a nice little animal and the Duchess with a monkey Kaross. In the afternoon there was a gathering of all the people of Livingstone and native war dances, etc. The next day (Sunday) we returned to the Falls and again saw them from every possible point of view. All that I am capable of saying about them is, that I have come away with the feeling that whatever magnificent or wonderful spectacle I may see in the future I feel confident that I never can see anything more beautiful or more wonderful. *What* a future there must be for this country! The people are all so different to those at home and the contrast makes one feel bitterly how played out we are in England. Of course there are "magnates" as they are cynically called out here whom I have scarcely met yet. I suppose I shall get a glimpse of them at Johannesburg. We left Livingstone on Tuesday afternoon and arrived here on Thursday morning. This place is of course much more advanced and much bigger than Livingstone. The Royalties had a great reception and are making themselves most popular and I must say deserve it all. They are charming to the people and the Duchess manages to

be so nice to them. There was a garden-party yesterday, when I suppose we saw all the white inhabitants. Such nice-looking people, such well looked after and happy children, all from highest to lowest with such nice manners. I have indeed been thrilled with the history of the community, who have been through the blackest of times, but who apparently have never been despondent and always hopeful and now they seem to have turned the corner and they think that their worst difficulties have passed. I could fill sheets with what I have been told, but I am afraid I should only make it appear dull and stupid were I to try and do so. I think it is the atmosphere of the place that helps one to understand them. The climate is wonderful. It is extremely hot in the middle of the day, when everybody lies hidden for about three or four hours, but the air is like champagne and owing to the altitude (5,000 feet above the sea) the nights are always cool. The scenery one could hardly describe as beautiful or even pretty, but the great distances one sees are very fascinating and the air is so clear that everything is distinct. The officials have got six months' leave every three years and it is said that scarcely any of them take the whole amount. They go to England and long before the expiration of their time they begin to pine to return here and nearly always do so long before they need. . . . Yesterday we inspected the local police force, who are a magnificent body of men and one hears on all sides nothing but praise of their utility and good work. Their ranks are full of all sorts and descriptions of men: University men, public school boys, artisans, gentlemen. Their officers are now all taken from the ranks, and I hear that the life is so popular that they have no difficulty in getting recruits and that most of them come from England. There is only a medical examination and test and no other examination of any kind! I am quite sure that three years (for which they are obliged to sign on as a minimum) of such a life would be the making of many youths whatever their after careers are to be. . . .

Nov. 19. I went out hunting early this morning and enjoyed myself very much, though the sport wasn't very good. The morning air was delicious and I felt 18! They hunt jackals with a pack of fox-hounds, but there was little

or no scent but galloping over that lonely veldt in the morning air is delicious.

Nov. 25. Potchefstroom. It's nearly a week since I last put pen to paper but we have had so much travelling in that time, and for the rest each hour has been so filled up that I have never found time. We have left Salisbury and arrived at and left Bulawayo since then and now are at Potchefstroom. Bulawayo was much the same as Salisbury, only bigger—the latter is the seat of the Government of S. Rhodesia, whilst the former is the mining and agriculture centre. We were again most comfortably lodged in Government House—more police and volunteer reviews, and garden-parties, etc. But what I did enjoy was a trip out to the Matoppo Hills to visit Rhodes' grave. Quite magnificent. I think I have seen more extensive and even finer views, but the character given to the place by the huge boulders is very wonderful and the spot which Rhodes chose to be buried in is the top of a huge granite hill surrounded by boulders which give one almost the idea of their having been put there. The effect to my mind is all lost through the fact of the memorial to Wilson and his men being on the same hill and within a couple of hundred yards of it. The memorial itself is extremely fine and in any other situation I would admire it immensely, but there, in the very heart of vast loneliness as it were, to see this huge monument is incongruous and out of place. Now Rhodes' tomb is quite different—a plain large bronze slab lying on the hill—very simple and very fine. The morning before we left Bulawayo I went for such a motor drive as one doesn't often get. At 6 a.m. we started off to visit some ancient mines almost 20 miles off. Over the veldt at 40 miles an hour in that glorious climate is something to remember, and to ardently wish for again. We had such a nice chauffeur, such a magnificent driver and as you can imagine, it takes some driving to go over those roads at 40 miles an hour. The mines are interesting, but no one can say for certain anything about them. Experts differ; some say that they are not more than 8 or 900 years old, whilst others say they date back nearly to Solomon! I expect they were store-houses in which the Arabs (probably) kept their slaves and gold until taken down to the coast. It

is known that there is quite a chain of them leading to the coast. We left Bulawayo on Wednesday and extremely sorry, I for one, and I think everybody was to leave Rhodesia. It is indeed a fascinating country with a particularly nice population. Yesterday (Thursday) we stopped at a place called Gabarous where we met Khama, the Chief of the Bechuanas, and several other Chiefs—not particularly interesting—all of them dressed in European clothes which does not add to the picturesqueness of the proceedings.

Nov. 27. Government House, Pretoria. . . . On Friday afternoon after writing to you, we went off to see the Government experimental farm at Potchefstroom, and extremely interesting it was. The farm was started some six years ago and costs the Government, not including original capital laid out, some £5,000 a year, and they say that never was money better spent. Besides having some thirty young pupils, any farmer can come and either go through a course of scientific farming, or get any information he requires. But what especially interested me was their system of dry farming by which they claim to have practically solved the difficulty of drought. Having once sown the seed in damp earth, by continually cultivating the ground, by which they mean, keeping it constantly harrowed and not allowing it ever to cake, they say they keep in the original damp. Now they say this applies to grass, and I am in hopes that we may perhaps be able to benefit by this at Cannes. I am getting information on the subject. Their fruit trees and orange trees especially are marvellous and never get any extra watering—the same with their flowers, and when one thinks that they are practically 8 months a year without any rain, it seems to me to open up all sorts of possibilities. They try every sort of possible experiment in the way of crossing different breeds of cattle—all for the benefit of the farmer.

We left Potchefstroom at ten p.m. on Friday and arrived here on Saturday morning, yesterday. They got a tremendous reception. Do you remember what Selborne said? that the nearer Pretoria we went, the heartier would be the reception. Certainly on this occasion it could leave nothing to be desired. The Government House here is perfectly beautiful. It was built by an architect called Baker and is a sort of mixture between Dutch and Provençal and seems

to suit the surroundings extremely well. Beautiful rooms, spacious corridors, staircase hall, and loggia, and it is situated on the top of a hill and overlooks glorious stretches of green valleys with fine hills as a background. The gardens are terraced and the country comes right up to the edge of the garden. The garden itself is full of every sort of flower and they seem to have managed to produce flowers of every clime together. I believe Lady Selborne was responsible for that.

All to-day I have managed to get away from the party, and Hopwood, Hamilton and myself, the first thing this morning, went to the Zoo, where they have a very fine and interesting collection of South African animals. There was a delightful baboon there which turned somersaults in the air on being told to do so. I can't tell you how funny it was. In the afternoon we three went out and saw the Premier Mine. Unfortunately being Sunday there was no work going on, so that we didn't actually see diamonds appearing from the soil—a pity, but it was the only day we could get out there and so it couldn't be helped. The mine itself is half a mile long and a quarter wide—a large hole in the ground—at times they employ no less than 12 to 15,000 natives! The way in which the earth is washed and the diamonds found was fully explained to us. I was told that the actual plant of machinery, etc., is worth more than a million. We motored out there and had more experience of 40 miles an hour over the veldt. To-morrow we have a big review and in the evening go to Johannesburg.

I am enormously surprised at Pretoria—so much larger and more advanced than I expected. Men who have not been here since the war tell me that they hardly recognize the place and that old Kruger wouldn't know it, if he could see it again.

I shan't be sorry to be on board again, in spite of having enjoyed the trip so enormously, for I am getting tired of having no privacy at all and one sees rather too much of everybody.

Dec. 12. At sea. Over a week at sea and beautiful weather the whole time. We left Durban on Saturday 3rd, and I don't think that anybody was sorry to be peacefully installed on board once more. I enjoyed every moment

of our time up country but just the last two days things began to get a little tiresome. Neither the people nor the places (Pietermaritzburg and Durban) were so interesting, and the usual luncheons, layings of foundation stones, etc., were not quite so well done and therefore more tedious, so that when we finally left, it was a party thoroughly tired, and very glad at the prospect of peace and quiet. I can now look back on the tour and distinctly declare it to have been in every way an enormous success. Both the Duke and Duchess played their parts most admirably and throughout the whole time never once failed in kindness, courtesy and consideration. The fact is the Duke is first rate. He has a charming manner with the people and always looks cordial and genial, and as for the Duchess I have no words with which to express my admiration for her conduct during the whole time. She was often extremely tired and very much bored but never for one instant did she show it in any way—always up to time and ready for anything—a most equable temper and unfailing good humour and she is always thoughtful for other people. She has a high sense of duty.

Dec. 13. . . . Two days after leaving Durban the Duke got it into his head that he would like to go to Sierra Leone. I told him I had no objection provided he would only stay there the day and come away before sunset, so on Thursday we hope to arrive there at daylight, spend the day there and come away in the evening. To-day we have crossed the Line and for the first time it is really hot. However, the ship is large and roomy and there are so few people on board that at least we have not got the discomfort of being crowded.

Dec. 15. All yesterday we spent at Sierra Leone and a most amusing time we had. We arrived there at 7 a.m. and landed at 9 and never, never, in my life, have I seen such enthusiasm as was displayed by all the niggers and seldom have I seen more ludicrous contrasts. Addresses were presented at the Town Hall which were read out by the Town Clerk, a large typical nigger with rolling eyes, who was in a barrister's wig and gown. The white wig, which by the way was too small for him, gave him the most ludicrous appearance and it was all we could do to hold

our countenances. The pomposity, the burlesque dignity of all the coloured officials made the whole thing a screaming farce, but their real enthusiasm and genuine good-humoured gaiety gave the touch which saved it from being quite absurd. In the garden at Government House the Duke received deputations from native chiefs in all sorts of ridiculous garments—some of them with tinsel crowns, and one in a naval cocked hat with military plumes—some in gorgeous velvet (shabby) robes and some of them with scarcely any clothes on at all. A deputation from Coloured Freemasons and from the African Ladies of the Colony. We were all quite intrigued to know who the African Ladies were, when there appeared about a dozen negresses, dressed in the very latest Parisian fashions, picture hats, hobble skirts and all the rest of it. All these good people grouped on the lawn made a really extraordinary picture and one had to rub one's eyes to be sure one wasn't dreaming—it was more like a scene from a very extravagant musical comedy than anything else.

Dec. 20. At Tenerife. Since last I wrote we have had our first spell of bad weather, and I must say the ship behaved beautifully—wonderfully steady and a good sea-boat. . . . We got in here yesterday evening, but the swell has been so bad all day that I put my foot down on the Duchess' getting into a boat, so that we have missed going across the island to Orotava, for which I am extremely sorry, as the view is something superb. However, I didn't want or intend to have any of them break their legs and get drowned. So there it is.

Christmas Day. . . . Our visit to the Canary Islands did not turn out a great success, as I told you before we never landed at Tenerife and Las Palmas was little better. The Spanish authorities came off and paid their respects to T.R.H.s and I returned their call and in the afternoon some of us landed and went in a motor into the interior of the island—not very interesting or very pretty. . . . We entered the Bay of Biscay this morning and with the exception of some slight mist are still in luck with a nice smooth sea.

This morning there has been a general exchange of presents, and last night we had a big dinner in the Wardroom and I said "a few words" and really meant everything I

said. They certainly have been extraordinarily kind and thoughtful and nice and the whole trip has been very much pleasanter than I expected it to be.

I think I have never until now realized the wonderful convenience of wireless telegraphy. I have been able to make all arrangements at Portsmouth since leaving South Africa and had not to think about them beforehand when there was little or no time to do so.

Dec. 26. We passed Ushant at 3.30 this afternoon and I am going to anchor off the Isle of Wight to-morrow afternoon just before dark and remain there until Wednesday morning, when we go up Harbour and the Duke and Duchess go up to London. . . .

And so ended a most successful trip.

After paying off the *Balmoral Castle*, visits to London and to Wemyss, a month's holiday at Cannes, he returned to Devonport—but not for long. Owing to the unexpected retirement of several admirals, his promotion to Rear-Admiral came to him sooner than he thought, on April 19th. In twelve and a half years he had risen from Lieutenant to Admiral.

CHAPTER V

THE COMING OF THE WAR

ON his return Wemyss had found the political situation unchanged and the goodwill and union which they had been sent out to South Africa to foster conspicuously absent from England.

So there is to be a general election in December (he had written from Rhodesia to his wife, November 18th 1910). I am delighted to think that you are not in England. It seems that *anything* can happen. Certainly, if the Radicals increase their majority there will be no stopping of the avalanche, and I think that Cannes or Rhodesia will be the places of the future.

And again:

Our latest news was Dec. 7th, when the state of the parties seemed to me much as they were before. I cannot believe that there will be much difference when the election is over.

And finally:

So the elections are over and we are exactly where we were before, and what will happen now! If there were statesmen at the head of affairs, I should think they might come to a settlement, but as we have only selfish, violent politicians, God knows what may happen.

In Ireland, the bitter political passions aroused seemed to be leading to civil war.

April 1911. . . . B. tells me that she knows for a fact that the whole of Ulster is filled with rifles and ammunition and that the Orangemen are quite determined not to let Home Rule come without putting up a fight. If it really comes to this I sincerely hope that they will withdraw all the troops and let them fight it out amongst themselves.

It was in this atmosphere of anxiety and apprehension, fraught with fears of internal strife and international complications, that the preparations for King George's Coronation had to be undertaken.

Wemyss was attached to the Mission headed by Admiral de Fauque de Jonquières which represented the French Republic, and from the beginning of June on his time was taken up with meetings at the French Embassy and at St. James's Palace, rehearsals at Westminster Abbey for the Coronation Ceremony, at the Royal Mews for the Procession, at times hung up by the Suffragettes, whose agitation was reaching its culminating point.

On June 19th he met the French Mission at Dover and there followed a week of ceremonies and festivities. The Coronation, with all its pomp and magnificence, took place in Westminster Abbey on Thursday, June 22nd, the procession through London on the following morning—"very pleasant riding and amusing" he noted—and on Saturday there was the Naval Review, which, together with the Court and Missions, he witnessed from on board the *Victoria and Albert*. "A most successful week," he recorded in his diary.

Balls, banquets, gala performances, garden-parties royal and private in honour of the foreign Royalties and guests, prolonged the entertainments till the end of June, when the Missions left.

A curious episode had taken place at the Coronation which had caused some little stir. After the ceremony, when the Royalties were preparing to leave the Abbey, loud applause, an unprecedented occurrence in a sacred edifice, had greeted the passage of the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany, the latter's beauty and charm having won all hearts; on several occasions, too, the crowds had warmly cheered the extremely smart officers forming part of the German deputations. When these incidents were being eagerly discussed at a dinner-party at the French Embassy on Coronation night, Mrs. Wemyss had observed to her neighbour, Sir A. Nicolson, Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, what a pity it would be not

to take advantage of this opportunity to try and put Anglo-German relations on a better footing, upon which, jumping up as if he had been stung, Sir Arthur had emphatically declared that as long as *he* was at the head of the F.O., England should never, never be friends with Germany! The Foreign Office, it was evident, had no intention to disarm—no more had Germany, as, very shortly after, the Agadir crisis was to prove.

At the time of this war scare, Wemyss was on half-pay. On his promotion in April he had seen Admiral Bridgeman, then Second Sea Lord, who, talking over possible appointments, had offered him the command of the Mediterranean Cruiser Squadron. Only vacant in eighteen months it meant a long period of inactivity and half-pay, but so congenial was the idea that he resolved whatever happened to await the vacancy.

Meanwhile time had to be filled up; they lingered on in London till the end of the season—went abroad to Martigny, a French watering-place in the Vosges—spent part of the autumn at Wemyss—he did a war course at Portsmouth, and finally, when winter came they settled down in their home at Cannes.

Cannes was very different then to what it was to become after the war, when overbuilt with huge palace hotels, overrun by *nouveaux riches* and war profiteers, its gambling-tables attracting the scum of both hemispheres, it was to lose most of its unique charm. Nice and Monte Carlo were at that time the goal of those who delighted in noisy pleasures or who patronized roulette and *trente-et-quarante*, while Cannes, though the glamour of the days when it had been the Prince of Wales' favourite resort and the meeting-place of the most brilliant society in Europe was beginning to fade, still retained most of its traditions of courtly seclusion and leisured ease.

Amongst its "oldest inhabitants" were the Count and

Countess of Caserta, by right King and Queen of Naples, who from earliest times had, much beloved by the population, made their home at Cannes, where their numerous family were born and brought up. Lord Brougham, nephew of the Chancellor, the discoverer and founder of Cannes, which he looked upon as a kind of hereditary fief, reigned with Lady Brougham at Château Eleonore, as famed for its roses as for its hospitality; with Lady Alfred Paget at Garibondy and Mr. and Mrs. Vyner at Château St. Anne they represented the leading members of the English community. The Duchesse de Doudeauville at the Villa la Rochefoucauld and Baroness Baude, widow of the former French Ambassador to the Vatican, were the principal centres of French society, while in close proximity Lady Stanley Errington, *née* Talleyrand, niece of the great statesman was spending the last years of her peaceful old age. The Grand Duchess Anastasie of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, mother of the German Crown Princess, and her brother, the Grand Duke Michael, and Countess Torby were settled in the Californie quarter, where the Duke and Duchess of Vendôme, sister of the King of the Belgians, had lately acquired the Château St. Michel. Prince Bernard and Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Meiningen* had also recently bought a villa. Amongst the many other notabilities spending the winter at Cannes at that time were Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, already seriously ill, and his charming wife.

Wemyss, eminently sociable by nature, had inherited from his mother and grandmother a great liking for cosmopolitan society. Devoid of all insularity, totally exempt from the shyness and awkwardness which render Englishmen so often tongue-tied in the presence of foreigners, his charm of manner, his gaiety, the zest with which he entered into every pursuit had made him a general favourite, appreciated alike by every nationality.

* Sister of the Emperor William.

He played golf, he played bridge, was one of the pillars of the Cercle Nautique, the club round which clustered all Cannes' social life, and soon became everyone's friend and confidant. Many a complaint of her son-in-law, the Crown Prince, did the Grand Duchess Anastasie pour into his sympathetic ear, while Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Meiningen never ceased discussing with him the political situation, her fears of Germany's "encirclement" and the peculiarities of her brother the Emperor.

On one occasion she related the story of the Hohenzollern prophecy, which made a deep impression upon him at the time, a deeper one still later on. Her story was as follows:

When she was still quite young—almost a child—before the Franco-German War, somewhere between 1867 and 1870, her father, the Crown Prince, was much interested in the restoration of the ancient monastery of Lehnin in the Mark of Brandenburg. Tradition had it that under the altar there was a document containing a prophecy concerning the House of Hohenzollern. The Crown Prince caused it to be searched for, and it was found in a stone receptacle. Written on parchment and placed there in the days of the Great Elector, it foretold the reign of a Hohenzollern under whom three wars would be fought (the Danish War 1864, the Austrian War 1866, and the French War 1870) the latter and greatest of these wars being undertaken by three old men (the Emperor, Bismarck, Moltke); that after wearing a double crown (Imperial of Germany, Royal of Prussia) he would be succeeded by his son, who would only rule for a hundred days (Emperor Frederick), who in his turn would be followed by a one-armed sovereign under whose sway Germany would attain unparalled prosperity and power, but after a great war the Empire would come to an end and enemy horses watered in the Weser. The Princess described how her father's face changed when he

heard of his reigning only a hundred days, and how he ordered the parchment to be replaced and built up again.

Delightful though Wemyss' life was, and much as he enjoyed it, inactivity was beginning to pall upon him, and he was therefore very pleased when asked to sit on a Committee at the Admiralty.

He returned to London in March and took up his work, daily hoping to see his appointment to the Mediterranean Cruiser Squadron gazetted; but week after week passed without his hearing anything, till one day a rumour reached him that it was not he but Admiral Troubridge who was destined for that command. This appeared incredible to him at first, all the more as it was Admiral Bridgeman, now First Sea Lord, who had originally offered him the appointment. He wrote to the latter, but received a very unsatisfactory reply, and soon ascertained that the report was true.

What apparently had happened was this. When Mr. Winston Churchill became First Lord in autumn 1911, his desire was to have Admiral Beatty as Naval Secretary. A post had therefore to be found for Admiral Troubridge, who, one of the inner ring of the Admiralty, was not a personage lightly to be flouted. The command of the Mediterranean Cruiser Squadron was shortly to be vacant; Mr. Winston Churchill hastened to appoint him, regardless as to whether he was the man most fitted for it or not or of any promises made to others?

Wemyss was furious at what he deemed so flagrant a breach of faith, and on July 22nd sent in his resignation.

Deeply as he was attached to the Navy, greatly as he would feel leaving it, yet of late years he had realized that with all the animus of the Admiralty *camarilla* against him, it was probably useless trying to persevere, all the more as he could not afford to be constantly on half-pay and,

moreover, hated having nothing to do. He was still of an age to find other employment; he had lately been approached to join the board of a big company—in Fife they wanted him to stand for Parliament; it was therefore wiser to go while there was yet time to carve out another career for himself.

But at the Admiralty there was no desire to accept his resignation—Wemyss had many friends and was very popular in the Service—the intrigue had been a trifle crude—the First Lord yet too newly come into the saddle to be able to afford an outcry. In a somewhat stormy interview which he had with Wemyss he prevailed upon the latter to withdraw his resignation on the understanding that the first vacant appointment was to be offered him.

Thus the incident was closed, but retribution was not long in overtaking the Admiralty. When, hardly two years later, in 1914, at the outbreak of the war, the pursuit of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* devolved upon the Cruiser Squadron, it is unthinkable that had Wemyss, with his cool courage, prompt resolution, and unrivalled knowledge of the Mediterranean been in command, he would have allowed them to get away scot-free as they did, so that their escape, with all its consequences—the entry of Turkey into the war, the disastrous Dardanelles expedition, the costly Eastern campaigns—may well be said to have been the direct outcome of this act of favouritism and injustice.

Wemyss wondered whether the decision to withdraw his resignation had been a sound one, for the state of the Navy at that time was such as to inspire grave misgivings.

The high hopes of better days formed at the time of Lord Fisher's resignation had proved illusory—a disappointment which in many ways could be traced to political causes; for, hitherto, whatever the party in power, the greatest care had always been exercised in the choice of the First

Lord of the Admiralty and particular stress laid on that, in sympathy with the Service, he should respect its idiosyncrasies and uphold its traditions. The First Lords of the past—the Spencers, the Goschens, the Northbrooks, the George Hamiltons, and others—had all scrupulously adhered to these prescriptions. Laying down and directing Naval policy, watching over the interests of the Service, they had refrained from all meddlesome interference in its internal administration and—great gentlemen—invariably treated the Naval chiefs with that deference and courtesy with which they themselves were treated. But the advent of democracy, or what passes as such, was to change all this. Their successors, politicians pure and simple, looked above all to personal and party advancement, and appeared chiefly bent on making as much political capital as could be made out of the Navy, as indeed out of any other office which they might happen to hold.

A new spirit seemed to have crept into the Board Room of the Admiralty which manifested itself not in principles only but in methods also. Appointments were now given more for subserviency than for competency; senior officers, oft-times summarily dismissed, were treated with a brusqueness and want of consideration which was resented not by them alone but by all ranks. Even Sea Lords did not escape the common fate, with the result of destroying that respect for authority hitherto one of the leading characteristics of the Service. Orders emanating from the Admiralty instead of being loyally and silently accepted as in the past, were now made the subject of acrimonious criticism most prejudicial to discipline.

That authority could only be upheld by the qualities of leadership in the Commanders and discipline amongst the men was Wemyss' firm conviction—a conviction based on personal experience. He himself had taken over the *Suffolk* with its company in a state bordering on mutiny,

and in a short time had turned her into one of the smartest ships in the Fleet, while he had seen the Mediterranean Fleet, which, under Lord Charles Beresford, had reached the highest state of efficiency, relapse into a mere unwieldy conglomeration of units under his incapable successor.

He was therefore persuaded that unless a radical change could soon be brought about the moral deterioration going on month by month and year by year would end by causing the Navy no longer to be in the future what it had been in the past.

These considerations still weighed upon him when he left England for his annual cure. Their choice this year had fallen upon Salzschlirf, near Frankfurt am Main, which Russian friends had recommended as very efficacious. There they were to meet Count and Countess Witte, who Mrs. Wemyss had known in St. Petersburg days. From the outset Wemyss was much impressed by the forceful and rugged personality of the great statesman, so typically Russian, who had played such a prominent part in his country's history and occupied so eminent a position in European politics. In the intimacy brought about by life in a small watering-place, with its many walks and talks, both men grew to like and appreciate each other, and Wemyss was never weary of listening to what Count Witte had to relate of all his experiences—the wooing of Russia by both England and Germany, his negotiations at Portsmouth (U.S.A.) for the Russo-Japanese peace, and how, on his triumphal return, two emissaries, one from King Edward, the other from the Emperor William, had, so to speak, been waiting for him on the beach, each trying to enrol him amongst their allies. He did not hide his admiration for Germany nor his conviction of all the advantages a Russo-German alliance held for both countries, and notwithstanding the ingratitude with which he had been treated, never allowed the slightest blame either for the Emperor

Nicholas nor for those who had encompassed his downfall to escape his lips.

In close proximity to Salzschlirf was Schlitz, the mediaeval castle and property of Count Goertz, whose father and mother had been amongst the intimate friends of Mrs. Wemyss' parents, who herself had spent much of her early childhood there and was therefore happy to revisit scenes she dimly remembered and where the memory of her family was still kept alive. Count Goertz' tutor had been the famous Dr. Hintzpeter, and it was at Schlitz that Sir Robert Morier had known and recommended him as tutor to Prince William (afterwards the Emperor William), whose chosen friend, accompanying him every year on his North Sea Cruise in the *Hohenzollern*, Count Goertz was to become.

It was Wemyss' first experience of German country life, and its warm welcome and patriarchal hospitality so reminiscent of old days in Wemyss delighted him. Many were the pleasant hours they spent at Schlitz or at the Richthof, hidden away in the depths of the forest, where Count Goertz and his unmarried daughter Countess Elizabeth passed the summer months. Leaving their little girl under their charge, they took the opportunity of making a trip to the old episcopal city of Würzburg and Rothenburg, that relic of the Middle Ages, and on the termination of their cure motored through the Black Forest to Ouchy, on the Lake of Geneva. They stopped on the way at Cotendart, the manor-house near Neufchâtel, where Lord Elcho of the '45 Rebellion had spent so many years of his exile, and where, close by in the church at Bôle, a monumental tomb is erected to his wife's memory.

Ouchy they found bubbling over with the excitement of the Turko-Italian peace negotiations; the Italian and Turkish delegations, lodged respectively in the Beau-Rivage and Savoy Hotels, were an unending subject of

interest and curiosity to their fellow-guests, till finally one evening a discreet whisper of the head-waiter apprised the latter that peace had been made and would be signed that night.

But the most outstanding personality at Ouchy, for many years her home, was undoubtedly Princess Wittgenstein, who at the age of ninety-seven still possessed all the alertness and mental vigour of a woman of thirty. Sister of Field-Marshal Prince Bariatinsky, the conqueror of the Caucasus, whose victories over Schamyl had already entered into the domain of legend, married at the age of eighteen, as his second wife, to Prince Wittgenstein, her recollections went back to maids of honour of the Great Empress Catharine, who each time their long-defunct mistress' name was mentioned rose up and curtsied to the ground, while at the same time she took the most intense and thrilling interest in current events. A convert to Roman Catholicism, but totally devoid of all bigotry and narrow-mindedness, her leanings were towards liberal, moderate Churchmen—such as Monseigneur Dupanloup, the famous Bishop of Orleans, and Cardinal Hohenlohe, who were amongst her intimates. Her stepdaughter was married to the Cardinal's brother, Prince Clodwig Hohenlohe Schillingfürst, Chancellor of the German Empire, her own daughter (mother of the present Grand Master of the Order of Malta) to Prince Chigi. Related, therefore, to almost the entire aristocracy of Europe, in constant correspondence with many of its leading statesmen, she was one of those great ladies of former days who through their alliances, their friendships, the influence they wielded, the knowledge they possessed contributed powerfully to oil the cog-wheels of international intercourse.

Mrs. Wemyss had long been an intimate friend of one of Princess Wittgenstein's nieces, Countess Schouvaloff, and for years she and her husband, during their many visits to

Switzerland, had been frequent guests at Villa Mon Abri, the Princess Ouchy's residence. When Wemyss was later on appointed First Sea Lord, amongst the earliest congratulations he received were those of Princess Wittgenstein, who in a charmingly worded letter signed "The Centenarian" expressed her satisfaction that his merits, long known to her, should now be universally acknowledged. She was then nearly 103, and was not fated to see the end of the Great War, during which thousands had cause to bless her; for hundreds of prisoners had owed their liberation to her untiring efforts, and countless were those whose fears and anxieties she had been able to allay by obtaining news of those dear to them. What in a great measure had enabled her to do so much was her friendship with Prince Max of Baden, equally zealous in the cause of humanity, and with his aunt the Grand Duchess Louise. The latter never failed to pay her an annual visit, which happened to coincide that year with the Wemyss' stay at Ouchy.

Sister of the Emperor Frederick, imbued with the same pacific and humane ideals as he had been, she and her husband, the late Grand Duke of Baden, had ever been the most ardent upholders of German Liberalism, determined adversaries of Bismarck's "blood and iron" policy, advocates of constitutionalism and an Anglo-German alliance, views shared by Sir Robert Morier, who from earliest days had enjoyed their friendship. It was therefore a source of satisfaction to Mrs. Wemyss to meet the Grand Duchess after so many years and be able to present her husband to her.

Before they left Ouchy the Grand Duchess was to send for them again, and in a long and earnest conversation to set forth all her fears and apprehensions as to the political situation. She was convinced, so she said, that Europe was on the brink of a most fearful cataclysm which it seemed almost impossible to avert. Her one hope lay in the belief

that if only misunderstandings between England and Germany could be swept away, those two Powers might co-operate to keep the peace and thus stave off a catastrophe of which it was impossible to gauge either the extent or the consequences. She therefore urged upon them to try and open people's eyes in England to the perils which were threatening and the dangers they were surrounded with.

Wemyss had just returned from London. Fearful of again being passed over, he had hurried back, and had this time been successful in obtaining an appointment, that of Rear-Admiral of the 2nd Battle Squadron, which he was to take up at the end of October. During his stay he had heard no mention of war, but he agreed that so solemn a warning from so authoritative a source could not be lightly disregarded, all the more that the outbreak of the Balkan War, thought to be the precursor of a European one, was then giving rise to a panic resembling in many ways what was to happen in August 1914. Gold vanished as if by magic, cheques became difficult to cash, seats in the train almost impossible to obtain, and when finally they did manage to get away their leave-takings assumed the solemnity of those fated perhaps never to meet again.

In Paris, too, where they spent a few days on their way through, feeling was very pessimistic, and the opinion seemed general that to secure peace would prove well-nigh an impossibility.

The Channel once crossed, however, the calm pervading every class of society blissfully unaware of all the excitement and war-talk abroad, formed a strange contrast to all the nervous tension on the Continent.

They arrived in London on October 27th, and on the 29th Wemyss hoisted his flag at Portsmouth on H.M.S. *Orion*, sailing two days later for Berehaven. His wife returned to Cannes, but before doing so sought out one of the leading politicians with whom she was personally

acquainted, a gentleman high up in the councils of the nation and destined later to be Foreign Minister. To him she imparted all that the Grand Duchess of Baden had told her, and her grave warning. A shrug of the shoulder, a pitying smile, and the astounding declaration: "You can be quite reassured, nobody in this country dreams of war," was all she elicited. Unfortunately in other countries they did!

H.M.S. "Orion," Second Battle Squadron. Oct. 31, 1912.
. . . Here I am at sea again and at present I seem to have nothing to do! Going out of harbour yesterday I felt like a fish out of water on the bridge! Everybody something to do except myself, and as I have never been accustomed to this it seems strange, but when I get some other ships with me of course it will be different.

Nov. 1. . . . We had no news of the war by wireless last night, but I conclude that the big fight is not yet over, or at any rate that the news of it had not yet percolated through. How one misses the evening papers and telegrams after nearly three years of them.

Nov. 2. . . . A very successful firing last night. I must say the ship seems in very good order. . . . Telegrams from Poldhu just come. Turkish man-of-war sunk. So at any rate our friend Tufnell* has managed to score over Limpus† and I see there are ideas of the Turks suing for peace. Well—now I suppose will come the real difficulties and dangers.

Nov. 16. . . . Honestly I am of opinion that you need not worry yourself about war. At one moment—just about the time of your letter—things were looking pretty bad and I thought one moment of writing to you what to do if things came to the worst, but I am in hopes that all that is over now and that with any luck matters will not assume such a threatening aspect again. One good point is, that there should not now be any reason for anybody to act in a hurry or lose their heads, and since everybody wants peace, especially Germany and France, there should be no great danger of war breaking out. Surely everybody must

* Admiral Tufnell, head of Naval Mission to Greece.

† Admiral Limpus, head of Naval Mission to Turkey.

now be prepared to deal with the situation. At any rate they have had time and can no longer have the excuse of having been taken by surprise. . . . I believe that there is a certain section in England who would like a war now, their argument being that it is inevitable (such nonsense) and therefore the sooner the better. I have no proof of it, but I am inclined to think that this is the line taken by Nicolson, though not by Sir E. Grey.

Dec. 6, 1912. . . . I see the Conference of Ambassadors is to be held in London. I expect that is to prevent Isvolsky having a finger in the pie, which seems to be a good thing. How Cambon will like it! But what about Nicolson? Will he represent us at the sittings or will Grey? I conclude that the Greeks want to go on with the war until they can take Ianina so as to have a claim to it when settling day arrives.

When Wemyss had been appointed to the Battle Squadron, Admiral Jellicoe was in command, but :

. . . I have just heard from Jellicoe that he takes over as Second Sea Lord on Monday next, so that the command of the Squadron will devolve upon me until his successor is appointed. He tells me Bridgeman is resigning through ill health, so I conclude Battenberg moves up to First Sea Lord, but this latter I don't know. I am wondering who will succeed Jellicoe. It is all so sudden that I can't quite think who is likely to come.

Dec. 13. I have just received a telegram that George Warrender is to come in Jellicoe's place. I am glad, for he is a gentleman and I can get on with him and I believe him to be an excellent officer. So that is settled and I am in hopes that he won't join us yet, but leave me a little longer in command. . . . I am going out to sea for a couple of days, so at least shall have that pleasure whilst I am No. 1. . . . I really think I *could* make a success of commanding a fleet, I feel I could take my Captains with me. You know it's only to you I would speak like this, so you won't think me boastful. . . .

Another politico-naval storm was blowing up; this time to rage round Admiral Bridgeman's retirement.

Dec. 18. . . . I have been dining with George Warrender. About Bridgeman this is what I hear—that he, Bridgeman, was always away from the Admiralty and never at his work and that consequently Winston Churchill proposed to him that he should resign, whether on the ground of ill health or not I can't quite make out. Bridgeman did not seem to see it in that light, and declared his intention of returning to the Admiralty, upon which Winston Churchill laid the matter before the Cabinet, who insisted on Bridgeman's going. Now you will acquit me of having sympathy with W. C., but I must confess in this case he seems to me perfectly right. But what makes my blood boil is the fact that a man—an Admiral—who has arrived at the dignity of being First Sea Lord should behave in such a manner as to allow of its being possible to treat him thus. . . .

Dec. 20. . . . The House of Commons seems to devote itself to nothing but the Bridgeman affair, and I think that B. himself will hardly thank Charlie Beresford for raking the whole matter up by the time it is all finished. Seriously, the whole matter is damnable, undignified and extremely bad for the Service in particular and the general good in general. . . . Here everything goes well and smoothly. I hear that all the Captains are much contented with my little cruise and approve of my way of carrying on. This is pleasant hearing, because I think to be well backed by one's Captains is more than half the battle and it helps to encourage one.

Dec. 21. I wonder if you have read the Bridgeman debate. It is disgusting reading. They all come out of it badly, to my mind. Winston Churchill, Charlie, Bridgeman, Battenberg—the whole lot, and I'm thoroughly disgusted with the First Lord, his Sea Lords and all my brother-officers. I have just had a long talk with Pakenham (Fourth Sea Lord) whose revelations are extraordinary. . . .

A few days later he left to spend his Christmas leave at Cannes. The agitation of the autumn had died down, the persistent rumours of impending mobilization ceased, and though a certain section of the French community was inclined to shake its head over the election of Poincaré

to the Presidency (January 17th 1913) and regard it as a triumph of the party of revanche, the general feeling was that the worst was over and the relief proportionately great.

Free, therefore, from all preoccupation, Wemyss could now thoroughly enjoy his holiday; he gardened, played golf, motored all over the country, and took his full share in all Cannes amusements. In the dark years to come his mind was often to revert to those last halcyon days, so peaceful and carefree.

It was with renewed zest that, at the expiration of his leave, he returned to his duties, for, born seaman, he was never so happy as on board, and his present command was a congenial one. On the best of terms with Admiral Warrender, he liked his Captain, Craig, and the other officers, while for his Flag Lieutenant Bevan and his Secretary Miller he cherished feelings of growing affection.

He joined the *Orion* again on February 10th at Devonport.

H.M.S. "Orion." Feb. 13. . . . This morning I went to see Sir G. Egerton the new C.-in-C. He thrilled me by showing me a letter he had received from poor Scott* and very nearly the last one he wrote. He never complains, but merely states that it was the unprecedented weather which caused the catastrophe and that he did not consider that he had left any possible precaution undone. He wrote quite quietly, asked Sir George (whom he thought still at the Admiralty) to look after his widow (he already describes her as such) from the Admiralty point of view, and then asks to be most kindly remembered to Lady Egerton, and this from a man who it is thought had already been many days without food and one, at least, of whose companions lay dead beside him. It is wonderful in these materialistic days and a great and fine example.

Scott had been amongst those for whom Wemyss had long felt boundless admiration. Years before, on leaving Osborne College, he had tried to induce him to become his

* The explorer.

successor, but Scott confessed at the time that his whole soul was bound up in exploration and the Arctic and that no naval appointment had for him any longer either much interest or charm.

At that moment one catastrophe followed another:

March 21. What a senseless horror is the murder of the wretched King of Greece. The criminals (like so many of them) seem to have been merely actuated by feelings of vanity. An insane desire to become notorious. I wonder if it will have any real effect on matters. I should think probably not.

All that spring and summer the Second Battle Squadron was cruising in home waters, off the English, Irish, and Scotch coasts. In September they were in Scotland.

Cromarty. Sept. 26. . . . To-day I have been to some famous golf links at Tain, not far from here, and it was one of the most beautiful days I have ever seen. The clearness of the atmosphere was most remarkable and the colouring on the mountains most gorgeous, which I fancy seldom happens under these conditions. Golspie Bay, Dunock Firth in the foreground, low ground behind which, gradually rising and ending in mountains in the background, with everything most clearly and even sharply delineated, made up a really magnificent and beautiful view. We have athletic sports for the men to-day and to-morrow, and so far I am glad to say *Orion* is as usual coming well to the fore; all this is very good for the men and helps to provide exercise and recreation for them, neither of which they get much of. . . .

People seem to me very much divided in opinion about Sir E. Carson and his goings on. The most extraordinary people, even those that one would have believed to be horrified at such proceedings, seem to approve. With him, of course, it is a question of man or mouse, and if for no other reason I certainly admire him for having the courage of his convictions. Like everything else he can only be justified by success. Should he fail or should he and the movement prove to be sounding brass, there will be no

words bad enough for him, and quite right, too, after all. But should he succeed, then of course he will be a hero in the eyes of at any rate one half of the public. It certainly is refreshing to find anyone with courage and a will nowadays.

. . . No word yet of who my successor is to be—really too bad of the Admiralty.

For, greatly to his sorrow, the time of his command was drawing to a close.

On October 28th he handed it over at Portsmouth to Admiral Arbuthnot, and after many cordial farewells left H.M.S. *Orion* "with much regret."

There was to follow another period of half-pay, inaction, uncertainty.

They had returned to their home at Cannes, a Cannes shorn this winter of much of its light-hearted gaiety, for coming events were beginning to cast their shadows—exceedingly black ones—before them.

The German Government's Capital Levy in 1913 had filled men's minds with apprehension, but in the endless discussions which Wemyss had on the subject with Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Meiningen, she always strenuously maintained that the French bringing in their three years' service constituted a threat which had to be met by Germany's adopting this manner of raising the money to improve her armaments, while the open way in which Russians were talking of war against Austria and Germany could not be overlooked.

There was no denying that at that time Russo-Austrian relations were beginning to constitute a grave danger.

The Emperor Francis Joseph was very old, his death was likely shortly to supervene, and it was no secret that his heir, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was a determined supporter of trialism, i.e. of the creation of a third kingdom, a Slav one, to add to the German and Magyar realms

already composing his future Empire, but this Catholic Slav State would necessarily form a powerful centre of attraction and thus deal a severe blow to Russia's century-old policy of Slav supremacy and extension; Russians loudly proclaimed that to prevent it Russia would stick at nothing.

In addition, other disquieting rumours began to circulate.

Since the previous year, when the Czarevitch's serious illness had left little hope of his ever succeeding, the numerous Russians settled at Cannes, or going to and fro from St. Petersburg, had begun to relate strange tales; they said the Empress was to be divorced and shut up in a convent, while the Emperor was to marry the Grand Duchess Marie Paulovna in the hope of having a son; that the Grand Duke Dimitry was to marry one of the Grand Duchesses and be proclaimed heir, or ominously spoke of a plot afoot to force the Emperor to abdicate in favour of the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevitch, the popular C.-in-C. of the Russian Army.

Added to all this, violent war propaganda was raging in most of the European Press, heavily subsidized on one hand by the armament trusts, on the other by the Russian Government, who, as it was even whispered, was financing to this end one of the leading English newspapers.

The Grand Duke Nicholas Michaelovitch, the humane and pacific historian afterwards murdered by the Bolsheviks, arrived at Cannes full of indignation at all the violent articles and Chauvinist plays he had seen and heard in Paris, in sharp contrast with the eminently pacific feeling of both Government and people. Even Cannes began to be tainted by this war propaganda, but while empty-headed pleasure-seekers were thoughtlessly applauding the martial strains of the "Sambre et Meuse," the more thoughtful and enlightened members of the community

exchanged their apprehensions and visualized their fears; the French saw themselves invaded, as so often before; the Germans, encircled, ruined, starved to death; the Belgians, their country turned into the cockpit of Europe, while for all thinking Russians behind the grim visage of war lurked the dread spectre of revolution. Few of them had any illusions on the subject, Countess Branicka, wife of one of the great Ukrainian magnates, foretelling that war would be the signal of a peasant rising and general massacre; this lady was to live through all the horrors of the Bolsheviks and to have her agent flayed alive in the room next to her!

Frenchmen were greatly agitated at that moment by the Irish troubles, which they feared might deprive them of the assistance they confidently expected Great Britain to afford them in the coming European struggle.

Matters in Ireland seemed indeed to be coming to a crisis. The incidents at the Curragh had proved conclusively that the Army would not lend itself to any attempt to coerce Ulster, and when it was sought to employ the Navy for the same purpose the reactions were even more violent. Two C's-in-C. and many Captains, it was rumoured, had announced their intention of resigning, whilst on the lower deck, where religious feeling played no small part, the stern resolve not to fight in such a cause was more emphatic still.

On half-pay and abroad, the question did not affect Wemyss personally; but, appealed to for advice and guidance by many of his friends distraught by conflicting loyalties, he was thinking of hurrying home when, happily, wiser councils prevailed and the matter dropped.

It was therefore only at the beginning of May that they started for the north. In Paris, where they spent a few weeks, the same anxiety which had reigned all winter at Cannes prevailed, and Wemyss was besieged on every side

by questions oft-times difficult to answer. To the blunt query of M. Deschanel, President of the Chamber of Deputies, "Are you ready for war?" he diplomatically replied that not being a politician it was not for him to say; but when Isvolsky, the Russian Ambassador, pressed him as to his opinion about a Naval Convention between England and Russia, he did not hesitate to deprecate the idea. He was well aware of Isvolsky's warlike propensities and convinced that such a step at such a moment could only be dangerous in the extreme.

In June they were over in England, and after Ascot he went up to Scotland; Wemyss was at that time uninhabited.

Edinburgh. June 27, 1914. . . . I went over to Wemyss early this morning. It's very sad to see the place absolutely deserted. I did not go into the house, but all over the place. . . . It was a beautifully bright day and a fresh N.W. wind which kept away all smoke and made the atmosphere clear and keen, so that everything was at its best. Chapel Gardens was really beautiful and very hot, and I spent quite a long time there sitting on the grass and basking in the sun.

I am going over again to-morrow to go to church, and then shall go over to Balfour to see poor old Jane. I love going back and seeing all the old people getting now fewer every year, alas! But it is not an exhilarating experience.

June 28. . . . Since coming back to Edinburgh, I have been listening to a Socialist holding forth in Princes Street. I couldn't help feeling much sympathy with a great deal he said—but Lord! what a want of knowledge of human nature these people display. I got into conversation with him afterwards and he told me he was a bookbinder and that he was constantly losing his work owing to his socialism. I said I could perfectly understand that and he said he quite agreed with the people for sacking him. Anyhow he was earnest and ready to suffer for his ideals. The world would be a better place if more people did that.

June 29. . . . What an awful tragedy, the Archduke! It may have tremendous consequences I should think.

The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28th caused an appalling sensation. While in England the deed was looked upon as one which might lead to hostilities between Austria and Servia, but was not likely to have more far-reaching effects, in France there was the conviction that it must inevitably cause a European war. When, however, after living in almost daily expectation of some action on the part of Austria, three weeks elapsed without anything happening, the excitement died down—all the more as in England the Irish question, in France the coming trial of Mme Caillaux for the murder of Calmette were absorbing the mind of the public.

Wemyss, projecting another cure at Salzschlirf, had been led to hesitate by the Serajevo crime, but finally, lulled into a, as it turned out, false sense of security, left for Germany on July 10th, where his family had already preceded him.

The sleepy little watering-place looked peaceful enough in the July sunshine.

Amongst its habitués they again found Count Witte, this time with his little grandson and a Russian tutor. He looked aged and ill, spoke bitterly about the way Russian finances were being dilapidated by his successor Kokowtzeff; the loan for strategic railways for Poland, he declared, had been entirely distributed amongst the banks as *pour-boires*. He still thought that a Russo-German alliance would have been a factor for peace, but considered that a European war might be inevitable before general disarmament, the great desideratum, could be finally reached.

A mutual friend, Count Moy, Bavarian Minister at Stuttgart and formerly at St. Petersburg in the same capacity, who frequently saw Witte, said he found him much more warlike than he used to be.

Count Moy had just returned from Vienna and was much impressed by the exasperation against Russia

reigning there; Russia was accused of deliberately trying to ruin the Dual Monarchy by constant mobilizations on her frontiers, where they were creating panic, spoiling the crops, and reducing the landed proprietors, their estates mortgaged up to the hilt, to bankruptcy, so that the universal cry was beginning to be heard: Rather an end with terror than a terror without end (*Lieber ein Ende mit Schrecken, als Schrecken ohne Ende*).

Another acquaintance, introduced to them by Witte, was Dr. Heinecken, President of the Nord Deutscher Lloyd, and a very pleasant one he proved himself to be, giving Wemyss much interesting information as to German maritime affairs. He had lately come from Kiel, where he had seen much of the Emperor, who had been busying himself in bringing about a reconciliation between the Hamburg-Amerika and the Nord Deutscher Lloyd lines. Both Heinecken and Moy welcomed the dispatch of an English Squadron to Kiel as a sign of the amelioration of Anglo-German relations, which, so Moy added, would be hailed with satisfaction by the German Fleet, since they would not be forced any longer to hug the North Sea coast but could go farther afield.

Their little circle was soon further enlarged by the arrival of Countess Sch. from St. Petersburg, who described the tropical heat reigning there, which she said was nearly driving the population mad, and the terrible strike which seemed to threaten a revolution.

Taking advantage of the fine weather, they made many excursions in the neighbourhood, and went often to Schlitz. Count Goertz was away cruising with the Emperor in Norway on the *Hohenzollern*, but his daughter and daughter-in-law Countess Karl Goertz, *née* Thurn und Taxis, were always delighted to entertain them.

On July 24th the text of the Austrian Ultimatum to Servia appeared in the Press.

* *Friday, July 24.* . . . We all motored over to Fulda this afternoon to visit the Convent church and the beautiful Jesuit library belonging to the Seminary containing the Bible of St. Boniface cleft in two during his martyrdom by the heathen. . . . Caught by a thunderstorm, we take refuge in the "Conditorei" (tea-room), where with the help of Moy I translate from the "Extrablatt" (special edition) of the Fulda paper the Austrian Ultimatum, for the benefit of Rosy and B. Sch. We agree in thinking it somewhat strongly worded, and Witte, whom we meet on our way back, calls it "grossier" (brutal)—but evidently the Austrians have had great provocation.

Saturday, July 25. We are all getting somewhat disturbed about the Servian answer. After our usual afternoon game of bridge, R. and Moy both question Witte as to what the results of the Ultimatum are likely to be. Drawing himself up to his full height, he emphatically declares: "*Messieurs, tout ce que je sais, c'est que si j'étais Ministre, la Russie ne ferait pas la guerre et je crois encore qu'elle ne la fera pas*" (Gentlemen, all I can say is that if I were Minister, Russia would not go to war, and I still think she will not do so). He is leaving for Nauheim to-morrow to join his wife. . . . Moy tells us at supper that his valet has heard through the postman of a telegram saying Servia has rejected the Ultimatum.

Sunday, July 26. The Servians *have* rejected the Ultimatum and Austria is invading Servia! I urge R. to try and see Witte before his departure and ask him again what he thinks. He does so, but apparently Witte has not changed his opinion.

A certain effervescence is beginning to make itself felt. The band plays Deutschland Über Alles and the Austrian Hymn, which the public listen to bareheaded, ejaculating Hochs—while great tension manifests itself between Russians and Germans, who eye one another with undisguised hostility. But both Moy and Heinecken, the latter in constant receipt of telegrams from Berlin, still take a tranquillizing view of the situation.

Monday, July 27. Excitement is increasing. Heinecken tells me that stock exchanges all the world over are in a state of panic.

We had planned taking over B. Sch. to tea at Schlitz—but she comes down to luncheon in great agitation and declares that she cannot come and most probably will return to Russia immediately. We all exclaim! After luncheon I follow her to her room, when she explains that Baron Meck, the Russian Railway King just arrived from Moscow, has received a cyphered telegram informing him that mobilization is in full swing in Russia on the German frontier; this seems indeed grave news. R. and I motor over to Schlitz with Moy, who is leaving to-morrow; he mentions having received a letter from his wife (daughter of Prince Radolin, the former Ambassador) saying the future looks dark indeed, but that England will have to put her foot down and maintain peace. A very pleasant tea with Elizabeth and Countess Karl; the latter knows Belgrade well, her stepfather, Prince Max Ratibor, having been German Minister there, and depicts the Servians as absolute savages. When she was there the murderers of King Alexander and Queen Draga were perfectly well known and went about almost openly boasting of their deeds; they were even said to carry about hair and bits of their victims as mascots! She says how right King Edward was to recall his Minister on that occasion, and regrets other nations did not do the same. We agree that to fight for such people would be madness indeed. . . . Goertz is expected back to-morrow.

Tuesday, July 28. An agitated and desultory day, spent waiting for news, commenting on rumours, buying all the editions of the newspapers. B. Sch. tells us Meck has gone to Frankfort to try and get news. Heinecken is most kind in showing us all the telegrams he receives and imparting to us all his information. When we express astonishment at the fact of the Emperor not cutting short his journey at such a crisis and returning to Berlin, he says that he has not done so in order not to create an even greater panic on the Bourse which his unexpected return would provoke. R. insistently asks Heinecken whether he considers war probable. He replies: "Do you think if I thought so, I would be here drinking waters when all my ships are going as transports?" He still talks of going to Paris on Thursday for a Suez Canal Company meeting.

During the evening H. shows R. a telegram the origin of

which he does not disclose, but we suspect of being official, to say the Bourse is better while the situation, much improved since the Emperor's arrival at Berlin, is regarded more favourably.

Wednesday, July 29. The day begins inauspiciously, the Russian tutor of Count Witte's grandson, who had been left behind here, has received orders of mobilization, he being an officer of the Reserve. He runs about the hotel with noisy leave-takings and lamentations, saying that he will never, never see his mother, who is at some Baltic seaside resort, again. It sounds rather ridiculous, but all the same we are all getting anxious and beginning to discuss the advisability of leaving. R. telegraphs to Admiral Hood (Naval Secretary) to ask what he is to do. Heinecken is out for the day motoring. Meck apparently not yet returned from Frankfurt, and the Russians have no news. After luncheon Elizabeth Goertz telephones to say her father has returned from Potsdam and asks us to supper for Saturday—this sounds more hopeful—and R. receives a reassuring answer from Admiral Hood telling him that his return for the moment is unnecessary but to keep himself prepared. Mr. Cloete, a South African, who is staying in the hotel, had asked him his advice as to the desirability of getting out of Germany, adding that everybody looks upon him, R., as a political barometer, for whilst he remains quietly drinking the waters, they cannot believe that war is imminent. R. in consequence shows him Hood's telegram, which calms him and he goes away full of thanks and evidently resolved not to move.

In the afternoon we motor over to Lauterbach, to tea with Baron and Baroness Riedesel, a long-standing engagement. A delightful old house in the middle of the town with a stone-paved courtyard. Both of them receive us most kindly and hospitably, he, Lord Chamberlain of the Grand Duke of Hesse, she a Dutch woman. They are most anxious like everyone else indeed as to the situation and talk of nothing else, loud in their praises of Sir Edward Grey and of his efforts to avert war. Their four sons are officers and will have to go, in case hostilities break out; they are also concerned about their daughter Countess Wilhelm Goertz, who is at Bonn, and wonder whether she ought to return in case the

country is invaded, for, in common with all Germans, they are convinced that the moment the first shot is fired, the French will be over the Rhine. Like everyone else, ourselves included, they believe that the issue of Peace and War lies entirely in the hands of the Emperor of Russia, and Riedesel always repeated that knowing him as he did, after spending several months at Livadia, and believing him to be a thoroughly humane and pacific man, he could not believe otherwise than that his decision would be a peaceable one.

A rumour that Prince Henry of Prussia was starting on a mission to St. Petersburg gives us some little comfort. We are beginning to realize the dangers of the situation and feel convinced that it is Russia that is pushing to war. The Russians indeed hardly deny the imputation. Prince G., to whom I expressed my horror at their wanting to drive matters to extremity, said quite openly: "*Que voulez vous? Nous sommes dans une situation si difficile. D'un cote, l'expansion des races orientales de l'autre, l'Allemagne est comme un mur d'airain*" (What will you have? We are in such a difficult position. On one side the expansion of Eastern races, on the other Germany barring us like a steel wall). Though apparently thinking war desirable, G. is persuaded that the Emperor will shrink from it, convinced as he is of the ill-luck by which he is pursued.

Friday, July 31. I was sitting in a corner of the hall Wednesday playing patience when Heineken, who had been out all day, came down the stairs, looking very pale and visibly upset. Silently he placed a telegram before me: "The situation has become suddenly much worse; the Russians are mobilizing and the British Fleet are beginning to move." He then vanished into outer darkness, presumably to the telegraph office. I rushed upstairs to tell R., who, very tired, had gone to bed. While we were talking—a knock at the door, the lift-boy with a telegram—from Admiral Hood—"Return immediately." We gazed at one another in consternation. The only thing to do, however, was to pack and leave as soon as it was light. But we had no money and everybody in the hotel, with the exception of the night porter, seemed in bed or away. We then bethought ourselves of a little money changer who sometimes cashed our cheques.

While R. got up and dressed, I knocked up Clara, told her to pack and get hold of Charles the chauffeur. The weather had suddenly changed, the night was stormy and wet; in pouring rain and pitch darkness we groped our way to the money changer whom we caught just as he was going to bed. Though he knew who we were and moreover R., always scrupulous, explained to him that he had been sent for to England, he did everything he could to help us and cashed R.'s cheque, saying, "I will do everything for the English, but for a Russian not one penny will he get!" The rest of the night we spent packing, Clara having even managed to break into the laundry and retrieve our half-dry linen! We were just finishing our last preparations when dawn—the dawn of a cold grey day—was beginning to break. What would it bring? Peace or War? I went to wake the child, who murmured sleepily, "Then it is war, Mummy." I rushed to rouse B. Sch. and urge her to lose no time and leave as soon as possible. When in the early morning not without difficulty we got away, she and Heinecken saw us off, the latter bidding us God-speed and regretting that should we go to war it would be on the wrong side! We motored to Frankfort leaving the servants and luggage to follow by the first train, rather wondering whether we should ever see them again. The weather was rainy, the roads very heavy, our speed not great in consequence. As we passed through the peaceful villages we had so often traversed on happier days and saw all the inhabitants tranquilly pursuing their ordinary avocations, it seemed hard to realize all that was happening, but as the morning wore on and we got nearer Frankfort knots of anxious peasants were eagerly scanning the boards on which the telegrams were put up; at one place where we got out to ask the way, a poor old peasant woman looked up at me with streaming eyes and said, "War, like in '70." We arrived at Frankfort quite early and drove straight to the Englischer Hof—opposite the railway station. No excitement of any kind and no extraordinary animation were visible. The news was bad, they said, and the orders for mobilization expected at any moment. Our first care was to send away Charles with the motor as soon as possible so that he could get over the frontier. Everybody was most helpful, and indeed there did not seem to be the

slightest ill-feeling towards either English or French, only against Russians.

After luncheon we sat on the balcony watching to see whether the order of mobilization would come out, but in vain. A little, very little cheering if any troops passed, but no crowds of any kind. Many special editions of the papers.

When R. paid the bill the head-waiter said it would probably be the last bill he would have paid as he expected to be called up that evening. "So am I," said R., upon which they shook hands and mutually expressed the wish not to meet.

We left for London by the 3 o'clock train via Flushing. At the station there were the usual holiday crowds and we saw no soldiers before Cologne; after that the bridges were guarded by sentries, but except for these we saw no troops of any kind. At every station we anxiously threw ourselves on the papers, but to our great relief no order for mobilization was published. In a paper we bought at Cologne hopes of an ultimate settlement and *détente* were held out. The train was not crowded, we had a compartment to ourselves all the way, and after an excellent passage reached London this morning—after our train had been held up for over an hour at Dover, the first delay we incurred.

The tragedy of 1914 was that of all the great nations to be involved in the struggle, not one ruler, not one Government, not one people desired war, nor were there any national interests at stake, save perhaps in the case of Russia and Austria, who, by the irony of fate, had composed their differences and were coming to an arrangement twenty-four hours before its outbreak. But hopelessly emeshed in a network of alliances, *ententes*, treaties, pacts, secret conventions, and understandings, there appeared to be no other issue. It is possible that Germany, long obsessed by the fear of encirclement, may have regarded the simultaneous Russian mobilization and the moving of the British Fleet as a concerted step, a supposition which the fact of the First Sea Lord, Prince Louis of Battenberg, being the Czar's brother-in-law may have well lent colour to, but, as we now know, the Emperor Nicholas had no desire

for war, and when finally the order for mobilization was extorted from him, wished a few hours later to rescind it. During the last impassioned discussions at Peterhof, when, according to the testimony of those present at the time, Sasonow, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, tried to convince the Empress that the choice lay between war and revolution, her reply was: "Monsieur Sasonow, I think there will be war *and* revolution," proof that the Empress was more farseeing than the Minister. The German Ambassador, Comte de Pourtales, whose beautiful collections and paintings were, on the declaration of war, to be burnt and looted by the St. Petersburg mob, had besieged both the Minister of the Court, Count Frederickzs, and the Grand Marshal, Count Paul Benckendorff, with vehement entreaties to try and stop the mobilization, now become the crux of the situation, while in the night of Thursday to Friday the Emperor William telegraphed to King George begging for his intervention with the Emperor Nicholas for a similar appeal which unfortunately arrived too late.

France was profoundly peaceful; the cry for revanche and the lost provinces had long died down, the Chauvinist war propaganda of late years being but froth on the surface.

As for England, it may be said without exaggeration that not only was the country absolutely pacific but even totally unaware that a menace to peace existed. Taking no interest in international politics, of which, moreover, the average Englishman was blissfully ignorant, neither the politicians nor the Press had ever opened his eyes to the perils by which he was beset, nor had the Government confessed to Parliament or people the commitments they had entered into. The result was that war, which since 1896 had been possible, since 1906 probable, and since 1911 practically inevitable, came to most people as a bolt from the blue, exemplifying Carlyle's dictum that "to the blind all things are unexpected."

When, however, the call arose, "The country is in danger," all nations with equal patriotism and courage sprang to arms, regardless of the why and wherefore.

Arriving in London on Friday morning, Wemyss had hastened to the Admiralty. To find himself during such a crisis without an active command seemed more than he could possibly bear. To his relief, however, he ascertained that he was to be appointed to the Twelfth Cruiser Squadron,* neither a very grand nor an important command, yet an active one.

†At the Admiralty, where I immediately went, I found everybody perfectly calm and ready for all emergencies, no sign of any undue excitement, much less panic. I found that, in the eventuality of war, I was nominated to command a small cruiser squadron whose function it was, in combination with the French squadron, to guard the mouth of the Channel. Here, too, the order for mobilization was expected hourly and there were frequent rumours as to the state of affairs. At one moment everybody being optimistic at another pessimistic. The preponderating Club opinion was that we were in honour bound to go to France's assistance, and great were the fears expressed lest the Government should not take that line. On the whole, London was extraordinarily ill informed, absolutely ignorant of the great issues hanging in the balance and seemingly totally misunderstanding what a great European war was likely to be, regarding it somewhat in the light of a second Boer War or even less. As an instance I may quote that I met Admiral Sir Reginald Custance on the Club steps in the afternoon of Saturday, just after the order to mobilize had gone out, and on asking him his opinion as to the possible duration of hostilities he replied: "Oh, these things are generally over in a few months!" Indeed everybody expected that the contest would be sharp and short.

On Saturday, Germany declared war against Russia and France.

* Cruiser Force 9, or 12th Cruiser Squadron.

† Memoirs.

* The order for mobilization was hourly expected and I went several times to the Admiralty to see whether it had come out. It came after luncheon, and I went down to Plymouth accompanied by my wife, by the 6.30 train. Michel, my Swiss servant, saw us off at Paddington and then left immediately for Switzerland, where he too was mobilized the next day. Bevan my Flag Lieutenant came with us. The discomfort of the journey in a train crowded with Bank Holiday makers was enhanced by a strike of the restaurant-car employees which caused us to go dinnerless and arrive at our destination hungry and tired. Great difficulty in finding any sort of conveyance to take us to an hotel, which we eventually reached at 1 a.m. in pouring rain. We were the first to arrive, but all through the night were kept awake by the incessant noise caused by hungry and hurried naval officers arriving from all parts of the country in every sort of manner.

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The next day, Sunday, we spent in a tiresome and somewhat agitated way—rumours and counter-rumours, listening to gossip and much nonsense. We lunched at Admiralty House, where more nonsense was talked than would have been thought possible. . . . We still oscillated between hopes and fears, finding it difficult to believe that we were actually witnessing the commencement of a war so often threatened and so often averted! A telegram announcing that the Dow. Empress of Russia had been detained in Berlin caused a great sensation. All day and all night the streets were filled with eager and expectant crowds whose cries at any piece of news, combined with the continual tramp of arriving reservists, rendered all idea of sleep impossible.

That day, Sunday, the reserves had been called out and Wemyss had hoisted his flag on board H.M.S. *Charybdis*.

The Squadron was to sail on Tuesday at 4 p.m., and it was at the house of old, tried friends, Engineer Captain Taylor, afterwards killed in H.M.S. *Tiger* during the battle of the Bight of Heligoland, that Wemyss and his

wife spent their last hours together and, after a heart-rending leave-taking, parted. He embarked and sailed away; she returned to the now empty hotel, wending her way through the dockyards, which, a few hours previously the scene of bustling life and activity, now appeared deserted and forlorn, the naval officer's private possessions, bits of furniture, pictures, photographs, etc., cherished treasures no doubt, hastily disembarked from ships "cleared for action" and heaped up in melancholy confusion on the quay-side, giving an added touch of desolation and abandonment.

That evening she travelled up to London, and while the train sped through the summer night, hoped against hope and prayed as never before that even now at the eleventh hour by some miracle this terrible, this appalling catastrophe might be averted; but when, arrived at Paddington Station, she drove through the darkened streets the distant roar of the cheering crowds made her realize that the blow had fallen—war was declared.

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CHAPTER VI

CHANNEL PATROL AND CANADIAN CONVOY

WEMYSS, with his Squadron consisting of *Charybdis*, *Eclipse*, *Talbot*, and *Diana*, had sailed on Tuesday afternoon, August 4th, and when at sea received a message to say a state of war would exist after midnight:

A rather disturbed night (as he wrote to his wife next morning) as I may expect for many a long day. Well, there it is and I am beginning to fear that I shall not find much to do. Guarding the Channel is worthy, but if nothing comes this way it will hardly be glorious. . . . I suppose that the crash of the two main Fleets cannot be postponed for long, and I shan't take part in *the* big fight—such is chance; had it been last year I should have been in the *Orion*, and now *Charybdis* is my lot!

According to his Flag Captain, now Admiral Sir Rudolf Burmester, the *Charybdis*, a small cruiser over twenty years old, had a scratch crew composed chiefly of reservists of all sorts, and must have appeared ludicrously lacking in fighting power, speed, equipment, and accommodation to the Admiral whose last service afloat had been in the *Orion*. Indeed, the ship was unsuitable—almost unserviceable. But the Admiral stood firmly to his expressed principle, that the North Sea was then the prime source of preoccupation for the Admiralty, and that they must not on any account be bothered by requests or appeal from such minor concerns as the Twelfth Cruiser Squadron.

A wet and misty night had been followed by a radiantly fine day, and at 11 a.m. they met the French Squadron at a prearranged rendezvous—a meeting which was the cause of much enthusiasm and cordial messages on both sides. Wemyss sent Lieutenant-Commander Erskine Nicolson of his staff on board the French flagship to act as liaison officer, whilst Lieutenant Fahner came on board the *Charybdis* in a similar capacity.

Wemyss had been much annoyed at finding himself without a Commander, but, just as we were leaving harbour yesterday, I received a signal to say that Marriott had been appointed here; imagine my pleasure, and sure enough at daylight this morning we came across a destroyer awaiting us with him on board. I am delighted; it will just make all the difference to the Fleet.

The absence of news was what he found most trying: I suppose we shall be in this state of newsless suspense for many days. I hardly dare to think of what is going on on shore everywhere. Misery and ruin I fear stare most people in the face. Here at least we are well fed, but I turn my thoughts away to my job—to almost anything—when they begin wandering in the direction of possible eventualities to the masses. May the Good God grant that it may not be for long. The more I think of the situation from a political point of view, the more am I exasperated at the stupidity and falseness that has brought the whole world to this calamity. Everything seems wrong, everything false—almost Gilbertian.

Thursday, Aug. 6. H.M.S. "Charybdis." At sea. A week ago to-day we left Salzschlirf and just a month since I arrived there. Heavens! it seems like a different life—a period of another existence. It is curious how all my ideas seem automatically to have changed. How trivial do things seem to-day which but a week ago appeared of all-engrossing importance. . . . It is a thing to be noted that here I am praying for the big fight to come off quickly, praying, that is, for an event which must inevitably cause England the loss of many gallant men and all of us of many a true friend and comrade. I feel rising within me sometimes a feeling of despair that I cannot be there to share it all with them, and then I think of you and I know really that I am just as much doing my duty to my country here as there. We talk about luck—is it luck! or is it Providence—God—whatever one chooses to call the Almighty Power which undoubtedly exists.

It is rather awful being here and knowing nothing—occasional messages from the Admiralty reach me about matters which concern me and the duty of my Squadron, but of news not one bit. The French officer who is attached

to me is a very well-informed and agreeable man. I will briefly recapitulate his views—or perhaps I should rather say his hopes, and I conclude that they are those typical at least of the French Navy.

He contemplates German advances into Lorraine and German successes everywhere along the frontier for one week, after which they will be checked. By that time they will have brought some 2,000,000 men to resist them, and they confidently expect a big victory in ten days or a fortnight. So far for the present. In the end they hope for the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine and break up of the German Empire again into various independent kingdoms—a limited *Prussian* fleet—the reconstitution of the Kingdom of Poland, and the division of the Austrian Empire into three separate kingdoms. I merely mention these as interesting as being, I tell you, the average views of the average Frenchman. He himself is wonderfully confident. I have heard nothing of Italy joining in. It appears to me that her neutrality would be of greater assistance to the Triple Alliance than her actual participation. Italy seems to me to be the only road through which Germany could import foodstuffs. She is surrounded on every other side. The Italian coast-line is so large and so undefended that if she joined in she could be blockaded by the French and English Naval Forces in the Mediterranean very easily. Even with the assistance of the Austrian Fleet, I think she should be at a disadvantage. . . . It was a glorious moonlight night last night and I couldn't help thinking of what might be happening in the North Sea. We have so far only captured one poor little German sailing-ship and sent her in to Falmouth. I doubt even if she knew that war had been declared. A Dutchman with contraband of war has also been stopped and I hear of several English ships arriving with grain, etc.

This evening I communicated with the French Admiral. We had a tremendous reception—cheer after cheer boomed out over the ocean—their band playing “God Save the King.” Alas! we have no band with which to reply, but we cheered them heartily. The Admiral wrote me a charming letter which I am sure was sincere in which he spoke of the deep gratitude of France to England.

We are settling down famously, and I am much pleased

with the men. I must say the organization of the mobilization seems nearly perfect. The Ship's Company are cheery and apparently ready and willing to do their duty.

For the first six weeks the Squadron patrolled the mouth of the Channel, during which Wemyss remained at sea, shifting his flag to one of the other cruisers whenever the *Charybdis* went in to Plymouth to coal. Without any incident worth mentioning, it was a weary time and very monotonous, giving him plenty of leisure

* to reflect and to make up my mind as to my conduct on every possible occasion. I fully realized that life in future, whether the war was to last for a long or for a short time, must be different, and I felt that one's general line of conduct should be fully considered and settled now, when there was time for reflection. All this self-examination helped me greatly as regards "nerve," and I found to my great satisfaction that having decided on a line of conduct I felt perfectly calm and confident as to any eventualities. This had a great effect upon me during the whole war, and all through it I never remember having any moment of nervousness or of excitement.

For the first three or four days the Channel seemed absolutely deserted, but gradually ships began to be once more seen, and on August 9th he was able to write:

We go on daily with our not very exciting work. Trade is evidently beginning again, because we have to-day spoken one or two ships outward bound.

It was on August 7th that the first news was to reach them through

a destroyer that we met this morning who gave us yesterday's papers. I am indeed surprised at the resistance made by the Belgians at Liège, for I suppose, even allowing for Press exaggeration, etc., the substance of it must be correct. . . . I am delighted, for it must mean a tremendous modification of the German plan of campaign. I have passed on the news to the French ships, and you can understand their joy. Good Lord! what a position has Germany diplomatized

* Memoirs.

herself into! Surrounded on all sides by enemies—not a friend near her. Truly if she is beaten, which I cannot doubt for a single instant, how she will tumble to pieces! It is sad, for she is a fine nation. Do you remember Princess Charlotte's story of the prophecy? I often think of it now.

. . . My thoughts are constantly turned to the Fleet in the North Sea. It is they who will inevitably bear the shock, and it is dreadful to contemplate how many friends and comrades we all shall lose, and one feels a gnawing at one's heart to think one isn't there to share it with them. Well, we are doing our allotted business, and one can't do more. But one's mixed feelings are not always pleasant. I see that the papers announce Jellicoe's appointment as C.-in-C., and not one word of Callaghan. What on earth can it all mean? It will break the poor old man's heart. I wonder if there has been any row between him and the Admiralty. . . . The Government seem to have the situation well in hand, and I am beginning to believe that that institution, the Defence Committee, which I have so often had my doubts about, has been doing good work after all. I see a German mine-layer has been sunk. Probably a large proportion of her crew killed and drowned. I wonder if it is too much to hope that afterwards, when, as I trust, general disarmament takes place, submarines, mines and military air-ships will be forbidden in warfare.

But it was above all for news of those he loved that he was yearning for.

Even only a scrap of paper to hear that you are well and all right. It's horrid. Here I am, comparatively close to England, with all these momentous happenings going on every day—you and the child quite beyond my ken, and I in total ignorance. . . .

My days are busy but monotonous. I find the time passes pretty quickly. There is always something going on, vessels to search, dispositions to be made, eventualities to be provided for, etc., etc., but, oh dear, how I pine for my dear family. I think and think and think. . . .

But as time wore on he began gradually to settle down and adapt himself to the new conditions.

I have very little time for recreation of any sort. Somehow or another, time slips away, and I feel that I prefer giving my spare hours to sleep because I am a good deal disturbed during the night. I have to sleep in my clothes always, but I have a very comfortable spring mattress and am beginning quite to like it. It's extraordinary how I find I look upon nearly everything from an entirely different point of view to what I did a few days ago. In small things, for instance, a dirty shirt no longer shocks me! I am very thankful to have a small bath, and a big bath to me is an unattainable luxury for which I do not even crave! My cabin, which a short time ago I should have considered bare and uncomfortable, is to me now a veritable haven of peace and comfort. You know how fond I am of B.; well, she seems to be now a person I knew slightly thousands of years ago, and I find myself vaguely wondering, without caring very much one way or another, whether I shall see C. and all my other friends again. I suppose it is that my thoughts are so wrapped up in you and the child and my work that everything else fades away into insignificance. I vaguely wonder how we shall be off financially when this is all over, and recollecting that if we are badly off there will be thousands just as bad—it doesn't look so black as it would have been very lately. It's a strange state of mind, and I sometimes wonder whether I shall not awake and find it all has been a dream.

His weary time of waiting for letters was to come to a close on August 14th, and from thenceforth, mails were received pretty regularly, either from the ships that went in to coal or else by torpedo-boat. He was thus enabled to follow the course of events in France and in Flanders with breathless interest. The fate of Belgium aroused both his compassion and indignation.

I am enraged when I think of these wretched Belgians being attacked and invaded. It seems so wanton. I know now I never believed the Germans capable of it, although one had talked of it so often.

And again:

I am so dreadfully sorry for the Belgians. Simply from a geographical accident it seems to me they are going to be torn and lacerated and ruined for no fault of their own. It's shocking.

When, later on, the *Charybdis* was to pass an old Belgian tramp steamer, he made the men cheer her, because I feel that we owe Belgium so much. I must say that the men took it up most enthusiastically and cheered over and over again which showed that they in their blind way also appreciated what had happened.

Confined in a ship with nothing else to think about except the war, he had time to cogitate on possible eventualities. The entry of Japan into the war did not fill him with unmixed pleasure.

Another source of trouble to be reckoned with (he wrote on August 18th) when the squaring of accounts comes. However much we may be united in our aim of beating the enemy, I fear that our interests after the war will be very different and that the making of peace will probably prove more difficult than the making of war. The buying of the German ships by America almost wholesale is another matter which I would rather not see accomplished. I fancy that Italy will not remain out very long. I expect that her desire for Italia Irredenta will prove too strong for her in the end and that she will take up arms against Austria. And Norway and Sweden, will they be able to hold out? The answer is probably yes, if Germany suffers reverses at the beginning. And the new coup of Russia? the freedom of Poland? How will that affect the situation? Will a Russian Pole trust the Czar, will the inducement to the German and Austrian Poles be enough to make them take the double risk of rising against their present masters as well as serving Russia? It's a bold bid. Well, under any circumstances I suppose the map of Europe will be altered out of all recognition. If Germany is defeated, I presume we may expect to see Servia with a sea coast (which she ought to have, every country ought to have—though I think Servia *horrible*)—

and Austria with practically none, which is wrong. Again, I suppose the break-up of the Austrian Empire is more than likely, in which case Austria proper will probably find itself a unit of the German Empire or Federation or whatever it may be. It is useless but not unamusing to indulge in these speculations. How sorry I am for the German people, the French people and the Belgians!

I sit and wonder and wonder what you are doing, and then I wonder when the German Fleet will come out and what the result will be. I have no possible doubt as to Victory—but at what cost? The longer they remain in harbour the worse it will be for them in the long run. . . . Isn't it appalling to think of the whole of Europe out for destruction? I am beginning to think that it was inevitable. Armaments had let loose forces that were practically beyond control. Disarmament by agreement had, I see now, become an impossibility considering the temper of the wielders of them, and the dreams of a peaceful Europe could not be realized without recourse to arms.

On August 19th the Poldhu Press telegram announced that the whole Expeditionary Force had been successfully transported to France—an enormous relief to him personally, for

I was guarding them, so you can imagine what I know and feel and the relief of knowing that they are all over is intense. It is one of the most dangerous and risky operations that can be contemplated, for there is nothing so vulnerable as transports. Thank God, they are safely over.

It seemed to him unaccountable that the enemy should not have made some attempt to attack such a vulnerable point in our communications. An immediate and swift blow would have had much success and would most likely have had a tremendous moral effect even if only partially successful. The longer such an attack is postponed, the more difficult will it be to carry out and the more confidence and experience shall we gain.

As time went on and day followed day, the hopes of an early naval victory seemed slowly to fade away.

It's weary, weary work waiting and waiting (he had written on August 7th), and I am much afraid the Germans don't mean to come out. They will probably use all their naval strength in the Baltic against the Russians.

And on August 9th:

My mind cannot help constantly turning to the North Sea and wondering when the clash will come. I am so afraid the German Fleet will lock itself up in its ungetatable harbours, the worst thing that could happen to us.

While on August 22nd he was of opinion that there seems but little inclination on the part of the German Fleet to come out. It is a difficult question for them. If they come, they do so to meet us at an enormous disadvantage to themselves; if they don't, they must lose prestige, and prestige in war has an enormous moral effect. It will, I suppose, depend a good deal on what happens in that unfortunate Belgium.

He was

puzzled to think of the use to which the Germans would put their Fleet, not strong enough to challenge ours on the open sea—not strong enough to vitally wound our trade and yet sufficiently strong to keep us ever on the watch and ever at the highest state of efficiency, an efficiency which entails an enormous expenditure of money, a locking-up of personnel in dockyards, workshops, etc. Their game is surely to lie locked up in their harbours, watching for an opportunity to catch us unawares. But if they act thus and remain in harbour it will probably mean their ruin in the long run. It will sap the morale of their officers and men. All history teaches this lesson.

In spite of anxieties, discomforts, and monotony, Wemyss' hopeful and buoyant nature soon reasserted itself, determined, as he always was, to look on the bright side of everything. Bidding his wife not to despond but to think of me as well and busy and to look forward with faith and confidence to when this nightmare

is passed and the world can settle down once more to peaceful and godly occupations, his mind often dwelt on the great part England might be called upon to play at the end of the war:

Heavens, what changes there will be whichever side wins, but of one thing I am absolutely positive, and that is if lasting peace and satisfactory results are to be obtained for Europe we, England, must be powerful at the end of the war. It is for that reason that I welcome the enlistment of 500,000 men. That must be our aim. God knows the War is criminal enough, but the crime would be accentuated a thousand times if the ultimate result is not to be permanent. . . .

And again:

Oh, what a chance we may yet have if we are strong enough at the end of the war to put matters straight in Europe. England should be, and may be, if only we go to work properly, the arbiter in the end, and pray God, if it comes to that, we may be a just one. I am beginning to have faith in our country once more, and that faith produces hope. I believe that now (whatever we may have been in the past) we are the one country which seeks neither aggrandizement for ourselves nor humiliation for our enemy, and that is the only way in which permanent peace lies. After this we must have peace, and such a peace which cannot be broken for motives other than honour.

In the meantime he rejoiced to see ships pouring merchandize of all sorts into our ports every day. At least the Navy is proving of use now, for the Atlantic is an open way.

He was

very pleased with the men, who seem a real good lot and will make a first-rate ship's company, while they on their side, according to the Flag Captain, immediately regarded him with particular devotion and affection from his unfailing personal interest and care for their well-being.

For his Staff he had nothing but praise.

It's very nice for me having both Marriott and Bevan on board. I like the Captain, Burmester, who is very good and reliable. I miss Miller very much, but Manisty, who has taken his place, is a very good fellow too. He has been out in Australia, lent by the Government to their Admiralty, and he has something to talk about. . . . My Frenchman is a great resource. He is so gay and cheerful; he never seems bored and always hopeful. He is full of admiration for our naval organization, as well he may be. The mobilization went without a hitch. There are literally hundreds of merchant ships taken up by the Government as transports, colliers, store-ships, and everything seems to have gone swimmingly. I must say I am most agreeably surprised at the smoothness with which everything has been done from the naval point of view, and it speaks volumes for the many years of hard work.

Any little act of kindness or good feeling pleased him.

We passed a French trawler the other day—so we stopped to ask them if they would sell us some fish. They wanted to *give* us all they had—naturally we insisted on paying, but wasn't it nice of them? They said it was the least they could do for a British man-of-war. The skipper particularly selected two lobsters; which he sent to me. They were all old men, the young ones of course mobilized. So we parted with much wavings and cheerings and goodwill on each side.

For the fishermen that volunteered to go sweeping for mines he was full of admiration.

That is indeed a fine service, because they have all the danger without the excitement.

His thoughts often wandered to the happy past, the friends scattered in so many parts of Europe.

Aug. 23. H.M.S. "Charybdis." At sea. We had a service this morning and actually a couple of hymns—the men sang very well together, and it was quite nicé. I thought of you and the child and of us three together at church at Cannes. . . . I hope you will hear something of our French friends.

I should much like to know what has happened to them all. I often think of Schlitz, of Lauterbach, of Eisenbach, and wonder what they are all saying of us. If they do, I trust it is in no bitter spirit. . . .

Aug. 24. . . . I fear me a most tremendous battle must be going on on the borders of France and Belgium now, where of course our troops will be engaged; I fear the carnage will be awful. The entire manhood of two nations standing up against each other. We are all very anxious about the results naturally and not much else is talked about. Unfortunately I think none of us have enough knowledge of facts to form any very good opinion. We can only hope. . . . I wonder if in this age of giant armies and pigmy men anybody will come out of it head and shoulders above everybody else. Nobody can tell. I think I have great faith in Kitchener. I am sure he will keep his head whatever happens and will help to keep the Government in order. . . .

Aug. 26. . . . It seems to me that we must go pouring in troops to France as long as we can do so. We have put our hand to the plough and it would be madness, folly and bad policy to do anything but stick to it as long as we can. I can't get over those wretched innocent homeless Belgian peasants. God help them!

Aug. 28. . . . I get quite mad when I realize that the English people haven't even yet grasped the situation. What must happen to make them wake up? Nothing short of an invasion, and that I fear is out of the question.

Advisedly I say I fear because that would indeed bring matters to a climax. But the Germans are not fools, and they know that such an attempt could only end in disaster for them. Had they been able to attempt it immediately on the outbreak of hostilities it might have been different.

It is difficult to read between the lines and get at the truth, but it seems to me we are just about holding our own on the French frontier, and that is about as much as we can do. From the German point of view that should be very bad, for I cannot think that anything short of a big victory for them can be of any use. They *must* sooner or later turn back to meet the Russians, and if by that time they have not thoroughly beaten us, they will have an awful time. It is an eye-opener and a great shock to me, to find that they

can behave so barbarously as they have in Belgium. What fools! Because if they are beaten, as I believe they must be in the end, they will have forfeited the sympathy and respect of the whole world. Pray God that neither we nor the French nor the Russians may be led into making reprisals and behaving in the same way. But war is a brutalizing force and I much fear.

Aug. 29. We hear to-day of a successful action in the North Sea in which we have sunk three German cruisers with comparatively little loss and damage to ourselves. Of course I am delighted, but I hate to think that I am arriving at that stage when I can rejoice over the loss of many brave men. God rest them—though they are enemies, they, like we, were fighting for their country. I am glad to think that whatever is happening in Belgium, on sea at least they are fighting like gallant gentlemen, as witness the behaviour of the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*. . . .*

I try to judge dispassionately all I read, and I must say I feel proud of our troops at the front. They seem to be behaving really well, and I never doubted it. I think the Englishman when properly handled is still a good fellow, and if there are rotters, it is probably the fault of the system and their environments rather than of the man himself. I am not at all sure I am not beginning to harbour very socialistic ideas, but not, thank God, of the Keir Hardie type. . . .

Aug. 31. Further details of the fight in the North Sea to hand. It seems to have been carried out in a very masterly way and our destroyers to have behaved very well indeed. . . .

† The press at this time (he was beginning to find) was irritating reading. "Business as usual" was one of their parrot cries, and as a rule it seemed quite incapable of grasping the situation and realizing what lay before the nation. It led the public to believe that all was for the best and that the war would be won by the Expeditionary Force without any further effort on the part of the nation as a whole.

The papers full of the difficulty of recruiting, but this is not really very extraordinary, and I think it is due mainly to the mishandling of the censorship. All the men who from

* See "Naval Operations" by Julian Corbett, pp. 133-4.

† *Memoirs*.

a spirit of adventure or from pure patriotism one would have expected to volunteer have probably already done so, but there must be many who from many worthy motives are hesitating to do so. These are the men who the authorities want, but what are the steps they take to encourage them? The censor suppresses all news that is bad, and exaggerates every little success, with the natural result that these men do not see clearly the necessity of their enlisting. They argue to themselves that if they are doing so well with these men that they have got, why should they require us? Half measures are, as usual, proving fruitless. Either tell everything there is to be told and ask for volunteers, or say nothing and have conscription. Personally I believe that the Government lost their opportunity during the first ten days of the war. In the fever of patriotism that then manifested itself the country showed itself willing to follow any lead that was given, and had they then conscripted every able-bodied man and set themselves to organize labour into the Army, the Navy and the different industries we should have been in a far better position to meet any future labour difficulties that are almost certain to arise should the war continue for any length of time.

On Aug. 12th we heard of the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* to Constantinople—an unpleasant episode which may bring much difficulty in its train.

In letters from various friends I had heard many rumours of the presence of vast hordes of Russian troops in England on their way to the battlefields of France, but I could not bring myself to believe in the story. If indeed they were being embarked at Archangel, why not disembark them at Brest? But I received on Sept. 3rd a letter from a very old friend, Commander Gerald Digby, who had retired many years ago but was now working at the Admiralty, telling me as a fact that 80,000 Russian troops were embarking at Southampton, truly a marvel. (Note added after the war: It was most extraordinary how this story in which there was no vestige of truth gained credence in the country. I never would have believed it, had it not been for this letter from such a stolid man as Digby. It is thought that the rumour once having got about, the Government found it convenient not to contradict it.)

On 6th September the Press telegram informed us of the formation of a Naval Brigade. An uneconomical and altogether unnecessary and unwise step, in which I recognize clearly the hand of Winston Churchill. Where we want men is at the front, and there we want them trained as infantry, not as shore-going bluejackets. The differences in discipline, in equipment and in training cannot but cause difficulties, and unnecessary ones. The men would be twice as useful as soldiers than as bluejackets.

It is perfectly staggering to think of what the war is costing—not only us but the whole world. And it is bewildering to think of the millions that have been spent on such places as Rosyth, Portland or Cromarty for this. For after the war they will have ceased to be of any use—either to the Navy or anybody else.

At the time he was putting down these impressions he was entering upon the fifth week of “this extremely tiresome work.” For over a month he had seen nothing but the horizon and passing ships, and he was yearning for a change. He never could get away. He had not slept out of his clothes since he left. His ships went in to coal but he had always to be at sea, shifting his flag from one ship to another.

It looks as though I am never going to do anything else. It's horrible going on doing practically nothing, though of course our work has good results, whilst others seem to have all the activity. I had a charming letter from George Warrender to-day which revives all my longing to be with him. However, there it is, there is nothing to be done for the present at any rate except go on grinding and grinding at our job, however uninteresting it may be.

I try not to get impatient here, but when I hear of movement and action I cannot help fretting at being so out of it. But it's no use and I try and remember that I am doing very necessary work and I keep a curb on my tongue because I know that I *must* set an example to the officers and men, but it's not always easy.

He was beginning to wonder whether he would remain at the mouth of the Channel for the whole duration of the

war when, on September 10th, he received a message from the Admiralty informing him that Admiral Bethell and his old battleships would relieve him on the following day, when he was to take his Squadron into Plymouth, fill up with coal, and proceed to Halifax to escort back the first Canadian contingent. His joy was extreme—any change from the perpetual patrolling of the Channel was welcome, and he started on September 12th with that mild excitement which is ever brought about by change from lethargy to movement.

His obsolete and worn-out old cruisers were continually breaking down; on this occasion it was the *Diana* which was delayed on account of machinery defects and left after the remainder of the Squadron. When half-way across Wemyss received a message from her saying it was doubtful if she had sufficient coal to take her across and suggesting returning to Plymouth. He ordered her to Sydney, P.E.I., there to coal and await orders. The Squadron arrived at Halifax on September 22nd. It had been blowing hard and Wemyss, never a very good sailor, had been completely prostrated by sea-sickness, but as was always the case when there was much work to be done and unusual responsibility to be borne, he was soon in the highest spirits and interested and thrilled in all he saw. As he was so often to find during the war, his instructions from the Admiralty were of the vaguest, and he had started from England entirely unaware of the ships of the convoy or of their number, or indeed of anything about them.

* On arrival at Halifax I found Rear-Admiral Phipps-Hornby, whose Squadron had originally been stationed outside mine at the entrance of the Channel, with his base at Queenstown and who now had established his headquarters at Halifax. I found no further orders awaiting me and Admiral Hornby knew nothing.

Accompanied by his Flag-Lieutenant, Wemyss started off by train for Quebec to meet General Sam Hughes, the Canadian Minister of Defence, in order to arrange the details of the embarkation and passage of the first Canadian contingent of 30,000 men.

* As might be expected, the transport arrangements were somewhat chaotic. Troops were being embarked in ships and no one knew what was to become of them. The Principal Transport Officer was Col. Price, who, as he plaintively told me "three weeks before had been plain citizen Price." The methods were somewhat loose. I heard Hughes say to Price, "Bill, if you want more ships, take them up and don't let expense frighten you." Expense certainly did not frighten them, for the transport was conducted in the most lavish and uneconomical manner. The ships were not fitted for transports and the troops were embarked as cabin passengers, each man having his berth and a steward to every ten men or so. But in spite of all this it must be said that considering the entire absence of any machinery for such a large undertaking it was most creditable to all concerned that the 30,000 men were embarked in the way they were.

General Hughes took him to Valcartier, the camp which had been formed for the Army; six weeks before there had been nothing, and he was delighted and somewhat surprised to find an orderly camp with post offices, telephones, shops, and roads.

† And although there was to my British eyes an absence of discipline it was very wonderful what had been done in that short time in the matter of equipment.

I had a nephew, my sister's son, who the year before had gone out to Canada fruit-farming. I felt certain that the boy had enlisted, and asked Hughes whether he thought there was any chance of my getting hold of him. I had to say I had no knowledge that he had enlisted, didn't know where the farm was, and in fact was entirely ignorant of any details which might help towards finding him. However, wishing to oblige me a telephone was sent to the camp saying that if

* Memoirs.

† Ibid.

Paget could be found he was to be at General Hughes' Headquarters at 4 o'clock that afternoon. We motored out to the camp, and there waiting at the door of the hut was my nephew.

A magnificent looking lot of men were those who formed the First Canadian contingent, but of course absolutely destitute of training and nearly so of any discipline. With an ignorance that was truly sublime in its magnitude, General Hughes told me that when "his boys" arrived in Flanders—and he thought they would land at Calais immediately—the enemy would begin to feel unhappy. The spirit was splendid but the ignorance colossal.

But General Sam Hughes was a man of action and presumably unlimited power; and he was so energetic and capable that they soon realized that his own powers of organization had achieved the result of being able to place the contingent in readiness for departure in such a short time. When, however, he went so far as to advance some views on the conduct of the convoy at sea it was quickly explained to him that once embarked and ready for sea the Admiral became responsible for the convoy, and that the plans for its safe conduct had already been prepared.

These plans in detail had been worked out on board the *Charybdis* by Captain Burmester¹ and the Staff, and finally approved by the Admiral before he left Halifax. For this, the first convoy of the war, there had been no previous experience as guidance, and much careful consideration had to be given to the order of sailing, the questions of station keeping, lights at night, communications, and the action to be taken in case of an attack. The orders finally issued may be said to have become the model on which many subsequent convoy orders were based and were highly commended by the Admiralty.

* Having made all necessary arrangements for the transports to rendezvous in Gaspé Bay at the mouth of the St. Lawrence I returned to Halifax by train and took the

* Memoirs.

Squadron round to the former place. In the meantime the *Diana* had arrived at Sydney, P.E.I., and she joined the flag off that place on our way round.

I had left written orders in sealed packets at Quebec with instructions as to their conduct to be given to each captain as his transport left Quebec, and I began to realize how hopelessly undisciplined were these same captains. It was distinctly and energetically laid down that from the moment the troops arrived on board the wireless telegraphy was to be cut off, but I might as well have whistled. They were at it all day, jabbering away like so many parrots. And when on their arrival at Gaspé I sent for the captains and demanded an explanation of their disobedience of my orders they were struck dumb with astonishment at learning that I expected my orders to be carried out—one of them even went so far as to say that he had no means of enforcing orders. I soon put that right.

The transports as they arrived were anchored in three lines and were assisted into their berths by the R. Canadian Ship *Canada*, which came round from Halifax for the purpose. They were immediately drilled at signalling and every effort was made to teach the masters their line of conduct whilst sailing in convoy.

My one anxiety arose from the presence of some fourteen large German steamers that had taken refuge in New York. All these vessels had their guns on board, and had they chosen to leave New York together and chanced it, it was an absolute impossibility to prevent some of them escaping our two ships which were lying off New York watching them. Any such vessels boldly handled could have caused much mischief to the convoy. They could easily have got among them during the night and sunk many before they themselves were destroyed. Such an attack would have caused a tremendous sensation and would have had an effect on Canadian morale out of all proportion. It would have been well worth their while, and I have always felt surprised at the attempt not having been made.

With these feelings it will be readily understood how anxious I was that the movements of the transports should be kept secret. But that was an impossibility with the Canadian and American Press inventing news if there was none

and moreover with no censorship. I did manage to get it put about that the transports were sailing independently, and before I had actually left Gaspé there was an article in the Press to say all the ships had left and were by then more than half-way across the Atlantic. General Hughes promised me that he would put a military cordon round Gaspé Bay and prevent trains from running past whilst the Fleet was there. Whether this promise was fulfilled or not I do not know. He himself came to Gaspé on one of the transports and brought with him a gentleman whom he introduced to me as his Chief Secret Service Officer. What he was supposed to do I never found out, but he tried to act the part for he looked like an *opéra bouffe* bandit with his long cloak and slouch hat.

Eventually, on October 3rd, after a great deal of tiresome instruction to individual captains, we sailed. Each line was put under the especial charge of one cruiser, each line weighed separately and steamed out of the harbour and were given courses so as to eventually form up in three columns, the order of sailing. All this was not accomplished without tiresome and sometimes amusing incidents. One transport on her arrival at Gaspé made a signal to say that she had only three days' provisions on board. This sounded serious, since we were to be ten days at sea, and I went on board myself to find out the meaning of this state of affairs. I sent for the purser and the captain, and on asking for an explanation was told that there were only sufficient fresh eggs for three days' breakfasts! But of rations I asked—oh, of ordinary rations we have plenty was the reply. Then why all this fuss I asked? There was no answer, but they seemed quite incapable of understanding that fresh eggs for breakfast were not actually necessary.

The convoy of thirty-one ships was to be increased later by two more—one with the Newfoundland contingent and one with the Lincolns from Bermuda, who met them at a rendezvous off Cape Race. They were a mixed assemblage, varying from the 18-knot *Franconia* down to a 9-knot store-ship. The speed of the convoy was naturally the speed of the slowest ship, which Wemyss decided to station ahead of

his Flagship leading the central line, and bid her steer a certain course at her utmost speed. This order her captain obeyed with a will, belching black smoke and occasionally explaining by signal that a slight reduction in speed had been due to a patch of bad coal. One cruiser was stationed astern to act as whipper-in, and her task was not an easy one.

* The escorting Squadron consisted of my own four ships *Charybdis*, *Diana*, *Talbot* and *Eclipse* reinforced by the *Lancaster* and *Glory*, the former of whom was flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Hornby, and accompanied us only for the first two days. Half-way across we were reinforced by the *Majestic* and the *Princess Royal*, the latter detached from the Grand Fleet to cover our passage across the Atlantic. The weather for the first eight days was extremely fine, a lucky thing since it gave the masters and officers of the transports a good chance of getting into the habit of sailing in company, for in those early days none of the masters of ships had any experience of sailing in organized squadrons and were consequently unaccustomed to station keeping, and all suffered from the feeling of danger in close and unaccustomed proximity to other ships. There were no proper signalmen in any of the ships, so that intercommunication was long and uncertain. All lights were ordered to be extinguished at night, but considerable difficulty was found in getting this order obeyed. Some of the masters seemed quite incapable of getting their orders carried out, whilst others, I fancy, not accustomed to sailing in company, were not too pleased at having to navigate their ships under what they considered dangerous circumstances. Two ships were so bad that on my arrival in England I reported their masters to the Admiralty and requested that their certificates should be suspended for some time as a lesson to others—a recommendation which was acted upon and produced, I think, good results.

One brilliant exception amongst those masters was Captain Thompson, R.N.R., who handled his ship as if he had been on the bridge of a man-of-war all his life, and I took advantage of his capacity by using his ship as look-out during the daytime, pushing her out some miles ahead of

the convoy, and the manner in which Captain Thomson used to resume his station in the line at dusk was a pleasure to witness. I met this gallant officer several times afterwards, noticeably at Mudros, and always knew that in him I had a standby. I eventually had the pleasure of obtaining for him the command of a torpedo-boat.

When half-way across I received a message from the Admiralty ordering me to take the transports into Plymouth and giving detailed instructions as to the order in which the ships were to arrive. This necessitated an entire reorganization of the ships, a long and tedious job. There being no proper signalmen, it took a whole day to get my orders passed through every ship. This having been done, the change was executed when we were three days out, and not a minute too soon, for the next day it came on to blow fresh and all station keeping went to the winds. There must have been as much as 30 miles sometimes between the leading and rear vessels. Southampton had originally been our destination, but it was changed to Plymouth on account of the advent of enemy submarines.

The last days, and indeed last hours, were to be the most anxious ones—German wireless calls had been heard all during the night.

* The day before our arrival the weather moderated and the convoy was broken up into three separate units and sent independently to Plymouth, and it was hoped that by the time the second batch arrived, the ships of the first batch would have been safely berthed in harbour. Vain hope. There were not sufficient pilots, and as I approached with the last batch there was a long line of huge transports stretching from Plymouth Breakwater to the Eddystone, awaiting their turn to be taken up harbour. It was a beautiful day and flat calm. What a target for a submarine! Luckily these had not then attained the proficiency of the latter years of the war and eventually each transport was safely berthed in Plymouth with her precious human cargo.

Their arrival at Plymouth was a glorious sight. On that beautiful autumn day an apparently endless line of huge

ships slowly steaming in, many of them decorated with maple foliage and all filled with cheering and singing troops, who would have probably rejoiced even more had they realized the situation, for

my own feelings on the subject were that the Admiralty were taking too great risks in transporting these troops in such a manner. A fast enemy's cruiser—and it should be remembered that there were still then several loose and unlocated—well and daringly handled could have created an enormous amount of damage. There really was nothing to prevent such a ship if she had once sighted the convoy from getting ahead of it during the daytime and getting right into the middle of it during the night. Once there she could have easily sunk many ships before she herself was sunk, for the difficulty of our own ships in firing upon her, closely surrounded as she would have been by transports full of troops, without doing incalculable damage, would have been enormous. None of my old tubs had sufficient speed to chase off such an enemy, and had such a catastrophe happened the effect upon the whole of Canada and of all the other Dominions and Colonies which were gallantly pouring troops into the theatre of war would have been deplorable.

He hurried up to London the day after his arrival to lay these views before the First Lord. "Oh, you must take risks in war-time," was his smiling reply. "Only justifiable risks," Wemyss said; "and I consider that under the circumstances the risks were *not* justifiable." His own opinion was that

* it would have been a better plan to sail each transport separately, causing her to pass through stated rendezvous with ships guarding the route.

His wife had hastened down to await his arrival at Plymouth and he was now able to spend four blissful days in London with his family, during which time my ships' companies were given a very well-earned and very welcome leave whilst the ships' engines had a much-needed overhaul. They had had practically ten weeks of continual

* Memoirs.

steaming, and the fact that there had not occurred one single break-down speaks volumes for the manner in which their nucleus crews had maintained their efficiency during the long time they had been in reserve and for the manner in which the engineer officers and engine-room ratings had done their work.

But it also spoke volumes for one who, as years before one* of his commanders had testified, whether in peace or in war, "his officers and men would have been delighted to follow anywhere" and who "obtained the best from everybody."

It was his first visit to London since the outbreak of hostilities, and he found it

† much the same, what struck me most being the many men in uniform and the flamboyant and vulgar advertisements for recruits. The posters appealing for them were a sad comment on our lack of appreciation and on the Government methods.

He still felt absolutely convinced that had the Government brought in a Bill conscripting *all* able-bodied men during the first ten days of the war it would have been passed with enthusiasm by Parliament and gladly accepted by the nation. Such a measure would enormously simplify the many difficulties that must indubitably arise anent trade, wages, prices and service if the war continued for any length of time.

‡ I visited the Admiralty and had interviews with Winston Churchill, Battenberg and Sturdee, and gave them all my views on the subject of the convoy. A curious light was shed on my being in the old *Charybdis* by Battenberg. I was asking him to give me a more roomy and convenient ship better able to accommodate myself and my Staff when he suddenly asked me why I was flying my flag in her. "Because I was ordered to," was my very natural reply. "Oh," he said, "I thought perhaps you had some sentiment on the subject!" He was anxious to know whether I considered my Squadron was doing useful work, and whether its presence was necessary at the mouth of the Channel. I replied that I could not possibly answer that question satisfactorily, for the true

* See p. 96.

† Memoirs.

‡ Ibid.

answer depended on information which I had no means of obtaining. If there was any chance of a raider trying to break through and attacking the transports and supply-ships running across the Channel, then my Squadron, old and slow as it was, did stand a chance of impeding such a venture; but if, on the other hand, the Blockade was efficient, and it was thought that no vessel could evade it, then there was but little possibility of such a raid and my Squadron could therefore be dispensed with. It was eventually decided that I should maintain my post, and that my Squadron should be increased by the addition of the *Euryalus* and *Bacchante*, and that I should fly my flag in the former, and I managed to arrange that my Flag-Captain (Burmester) and Marriott should be transferred to her, a very satisfactory arrangement for me.

He returned to Devonport after four days of much-appreciated rest and quiet, and after a few days in the *Charybdis* turned over to the *Euryalus*.

* The poor *Charybdis* came to an inglorious end. Some little time later she was detached from me and sent out to Bermuda on some service, and whilst there came into collision with a tramp, with the result that as her bow was badly damaged it was thought not worth while to repair her, so she was paid off at Bermuda and remains there to the present day for aught I know.

October 23. H.M.S. "*Charybdis*." The last time I shall date my letters from this old ship. . . . I have felt terribly cramped here and my wretched Staff have had no space to work in at all. They will feel the benefit of the change even more than I.

October 25. H.M.S. "*Euryalus*." I am delighted with the *Euryalus*. A better ship in every way. We are all revelling in the change. Better guns—better manned—and much more roomy and comfortable. Nice officers and a fine ship's company. The reserve men throughout seem a splendid lot of men and far beyond anything I expected. Their average age of course is a good deal higher than the regulars, but what they lack in activity they make up for in solidity. Now that I have six ships instead of only four I feel much more

that I can do something when called upon. . . . I suppose you have read the dispatches about the fight off Heligoland on August 28th. I am very glad to see that Herbert Meade is mentioned as having done well and Tyrwhitt has got a C.B. which he seems thoroughly to have deserved.

The autumn of 1914 was to be one of unrelieved gloom.

In Flanders the carnage was appalling, the casualties awful; every list seemed to contain the names of relations, friends, acquaintances. Added to this, one naval disaster followed another. The torpedoing of three cruisers, the *Aboukir*, *Hogue*, and *Cressy*, with fearful loss of life, had caused a universal cry of horror, for not only had they been manned by reservists but also by Osborne cadets, a useless and unnecessary sacrifice of many young lives, while the loss was generally attributed to the lack of proper precaution; the mining at Lough Swilly of the *Audacious*, one of our largest battleships, a fact which though carefully concealed was soon to be generally known; the unfortunate intervention of Winston Churchill at Antwerp, leading to the internment of a brigade of the Naval Division in Holland, made the outcry against the Admiralty grow louder and louder.

The results of Lord Fisher's long reign were becoming more and more apparent. Desirous of keeping all power in his own hands, he had always strenuously opposed the creation of a proper War Staff, the lack of which was every day making itself more cryingly felt. Subservience had been unable to replace competence. Many members of the "fish pond" had hopelessly broken down. Favouritism instead of being the "secret of success" had proved itself to be that of failure.

And yet when to propitiate popular clamour Prince Louis of Battenberg was offered up as a scapegoat on account of his German origin, Winston Churchill did not hesitate to bring back Lord Fisher to the Admiralty as First Sea Lord.

October 31. *H.M.S. "Eclipse."* Imagine my feelings this morning when the Press telegram informed the world of the re-advent of Fisher! It's horrible. And only now, after the war has been raging for three months, to find out that Battenberg is a German. I trust, but I doubt, that the conduct of the campaign may keep Fisher too busy to allow him time for internal intrigue, and I am wondering how long it will be before he and W. C. fall out. They will be as thick as thieves at first until they differ on some subject, probably as to who is to be No. 1, when they will begin to intrigue against each other. There is no doubt but that Fisher, unless he has grown too old, is much better able to run the show than Battenberg, if only he will stick to his business, which is running the Naval Campaign, but it's too much to expect, I fear, from past experience. What an extraordinary nation we are.

Nov. 2. *H.M.S. "Euryalus."* I am not going to say anything more about Fisher's appointment. Criticism can do no good, and one can surely hope that at this crisis he may perhaps only have time to exercise his undoubted ability and that his underhand intrigues may be left behind. . . . I see the *Hermes* has been torpedoed, but at least she was fighting when it happened, and it is not so horrible therefore as the case of the other three cruisers which were caught doing nothing.

Nov. 5. *H.M.S. "Euryalus."* . . . I cannot describe to you my feelings when I heard Percy Scott had been resurrected and brought to the Admiralty. Well, one was a fool to hope that Fisher would not return to his old ways, but I suppose that in one's blackest moments one clings to straws, and certainly the idea he would not was even slighter than a straw. And one is so absolutely helpless. What on earth does the country expect? I am thoroughly sick and disgusted. And if there is anybody who would like to resign how can they do so now? At war. It is impossible for anybody to show their resentment.

Nov. 6. We heard last night of the German cruiser *Yorck* being sunk. Poor devils. I really can't find it in my heart to be glad. And yet I suppose I ought to be. Nothing doing and life very dull. However, we manage to keep the men cheery, which is a great thing.

Nov. 9. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. . . . Alas! Yesterday I heard the bad news about poor Cradock. It would be extremely unfair to make any criticism because one knows nothing of the details which led up to his encounter with the German superior force, but apparently there has been bungling somewhere. The Admiralty notice on the subject does not seem to err on the side of generosity and leaves rather the unpleasant impression behind that they are inclined to lay the blame on Cradock, whereas it is quite possible that the blame (if there is any) may lie quite well elsewhere. . . . Poor Cradock, as gallant an officer as ever trod. I fear he may have been terribly handicapped by not being given enough information. In the meantime I can hear nothing of the Troubridge Court Martial, though I gather it took place last week. . . . I have to go to another ship again; really this chopping and changing becomes extremely tiresome and monotonous! However, we are not at war to amuse ourselves and one must not go out of one's way to discover crumpled rose-leaves.

Nov. 11. H.M.S. "Diana." I am really glad that the *Emden* has at last been caught, but I hope her Captain is alive. He has proved himself a gallant and a "game" man, and has always behaved like a gentleman, more than can be said, I am sorry to say, for all of them. I fancy from stray bits of information that it is the young generation that is so bitterly anti-English, among the officers at least, and that among the more senior ones but little bitterness exists. . . .

Poor Cradock! A real gallant fellow. I fear he must have been caught whilst trying to effect a junction with other ships. He was too good an Admiral to throw himself away thoughtlessly, but too gallant a man not to fight when caught. Peace be to him and I pray that the Admiralty may not play the game I suspect them of, viz. throwing the blame which should accrue to them on him. This is not a generous thought of mine, but I cannot help entertaining it. . . . Well, we are suffering from the upheaval brought about in Fisher's long reign, for very certain am I that had the traditions of former First Sea Lords like Walter Kerr, Richards, etc., been adhered to, we should never have had all this wave of distrust and discontent that pervades a large portion of us now. . . .

Nov. 12. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. . . . And I see Troubridge has been acquitted! Well of course I have not seen the evidence and therefore I am in no position to judge, to criticize therefore would be ungenerous if nothing else. I suppose that war even if well conducted must always produce disagreeable incidents.

Nov. 13. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. . . . The life I lead does not conduce to patience, for really I have not much to do except read and think and think and read again. Sometimes I have spells of being very busy and then again nothing to do.

At all times a voracious reader, he was continuously clamouring for books to be sent down to him, especially histories and biographies; later on he took up the study of international law.

Nov. 14. H.M.S. "Bacchante." At sea. . . . Dear Cannes, it is restful even to think of it. How far away all those happy days seem! I wonder if you have heard anything of our French friends. . . . I suppose there must be the most tremendous political excitement amongst all the Poles, for I fancy that they at least will realize something out of all this. However, what a mix up it all will be, and if there is anybody left I should think the Conference would lead to more fighting. I see that so far the war has cost us 100 million pounds, just about one million a day. Isn't it prodigious? Can you conceive how they are going to tax us to raise the money. And what is horrible to think is that there are many people who must be making fortunes. I hear that some motor manufacturing companies are showing profits of over 100% and Government contractors of all sorts must be coining money. I think any profits over 5% ought to be confiscated by the Government as a war tax.

Nov. 20. . . . I see there is a brief account of poor Cradock's action, but it doesn't give satisfactory details of how it was led up to, and the *Canopus* is still a mystery. I wonder how things are going on at the Admiralty, and I sometimes dread that Fisher to justify his existence there may be led into doing something unnecessary. It's his age,

the fact that he has been out of it these years and the manner of his return that I distrust.

Dec. 10. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. This has been quite a red-letter day: firstly, I received two letters from you. Secondly, the sun has actually been shining brightly. Thirdly, we have received the good news of Sturdee's success. And fourthly, I have got back to my own ship! I can't tell you how pleased I am that it should have been Sturdee who has brought to book that German Squadron. The last time I was at the Admiralty I quite gathered that they were inclined to be down upon him. He has performed his work extraordinarily expeditiously, with a combination, I have no doubt, of good management and good luck. . . . I am in great hopes that he will now be able to get hold of the other German Cruisers that are knocking about the Atlantic and then we shall be able to confine ourselves to the North Sea and Suez Canal. It will be a great relief to the Admiralty and will free a lot of ships. It is a great pity that they couldn't harden their hearts to take these steps long ago and save poor Cradock and his ships and men.

Dec. 16. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. You can imagine the state of tension we are all in when I tell you that we have heard of the raid on Scarborough and that we believe from what we can hear that there is the possibility of a big fight to-day or to-morrow. One picks up scraps of intelligence from wireless telegrams enough to put one into a state of expectation but not enough to know accurately what is going on.

Dec. 17. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. No further news of any sort, so I am afraid that the Germans have escaped our ships. These very short days are much in their favour, for the dark hours of course help them to escape. I wonder if much damage has been done to Scarborough and how the public will accept the situation.

Dec. 19. H.M.S. "Bacchante." At sea. . . . I wonder what you think of the Scarborough Raid? Myself I am very much puzzled, for the Germans are not people who do anything without a reason and I cannot find sufficient reason for their doing this. Certainly it had no strategic value. From a military point it did no harm and for all it did the situation remains the same. What was their object? Was it to be able

to tell the German public that their Navy had done something? The bombardment of an unfortified and defenceless town is not a very magnificent act of warfare. At the same time I quite thought it was a feint to cover some bigger operation and I wondered whether the long-expected invasion was really coming off at last. The short days are a distinct handicap for us, for had there been more daylight I fancy we must have brought them to book. Those wretched people at Scarborough! It does seem unnecessarily brutal, doesn't it? . . .

There is a capital account in *The Times* of the *Sydney-Emden* fight. I was particularly pleased to read it because it goes to show that the naval fighting at any rate has been carried out in a thoroughly gentlemanlike way and quite up to old traditions. And so would it all be I expect if it were not for the Press and the Politicians. I quite foresee the time when English and German naval officers will be better friends than ever. Except for these few bright examples, it seems to me that the war is being waged on all sides in a beastly spirit.

During the last two months the weather had been particularly stormy; wild gales swept the mouth of the Channel. Always at sea, incessantly knocked about, often in one of the smaller cruisers, Wemyss' thoughts dwelt regretfully on his Cannes home:

How I long sometimes for the sunshine and the *sparkle* of the Croix des Gardes. I like to imagine ourselves out walking and at that turn in the road when one first sees Grasse and the Alps beyond. What a view, and contrast it with the dull grey horizon which has been my range of view for the last six months!

The approaching Christmastide only added to his dejection:

Dec. 22. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. . . . I am going into harbour on Thursday morning to get mails. The blue-jackets will like to get their Christmas letters—poor devils—they don't get much of a time out here. . . . I get quite angry when I think of this time last year when we were

preparing the Christmas tree for the child. How delightful it all was and little did we reck what the New Year would bring forth, and now instead of a happy time in a happy home we are separated and away from our beautiful sunny "nid."

Christmas Day. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. What a Christmas! All the world fighting—one half doing its best to kill the other half. Surely a travesty on the religion the birth of whose Founder to-day is the anniversary. And personally how horrid. Away from home—unable to get news. . . . The ships cheered me very heartily—which is nice. They did not decorate the Mess Deck because of the war which I thought showed good feeling on their part.

The monotony was beginning to weigh heavily upon his spirits:

I almost forget the passage of time. Every day is so exactly like another—the arrival of mails is the only joy and the only landmark. I never know without calculating what the day of the week is, much less the day of the month. But what a waste of time it all seems. Five months now have I been at this, and how much more profitably spent might those five months have been. I wonder if Nelson, Collingwood and Co. got as deadly bored as I do?

Dec. 27. . . . I feel the want of a little change. The monotony sometimes gets almost unbearable, and the bad weather and want of exercise all help to make one feel it the more.

Dec. 31. . . . Just entering harbour after one of the worst nights I have ever spent at sea.

The gale continued for several days, and it was on the following night—that of December 31st to January 1st—that H.M.S. *Formidable* was torpedoed by a submarine. The *Euryalus*, though some distance off, sent her boats to the rescue, but owing to the very stormy seas there were hardly any survivors.

To counter the daily increasing submarine peril Wemyss had some time previously worked out a scheme which he had submitted to the Admiralty, for

* the situation in the Channel was very different on my resuming my duties to what it had been in September. Enemy submarines had now made their way there and rendered our work much more difficult. No longer could we afford to stop and examine vessels for fear of presenting a target to these pests. No longer could we economize coal by slow steaming or stopping. We had to keep moving and zig-zagging. The weather moreover became bad, and more than ever was I thankful for the *Euryalus*. No longer could I transfer myself and Staff at pleasure from one ship to another at sea and so had to go into harbour and transfer in safety behind the breakwater. The menace from the submarines made me doubt more and more as to the utility of the work that my Squadron was doing and I made out a plan for a patrol line of trawlers, supported by a squadron of cruisers in harbour and in instant readiness to proceed to sea should the enemy attempt to force the Channel. In conjunction with this I considered that the war signal stations should be in closer touch with me than they were, if not actually under my orders.

Taking advantage of his ship being in harbour to coal, Wemyss travelled up to London to lay his views before the Admiralty, where, however, they met with little or no encouragement: he and his Squadron were but unimportant in the eyes of the Admiralty, where there was no proper War Staff, only a chief and an undermanned operations divisions, and though his plans were not regarded with disfavour, lack of trawlers, insufficient personnel at the Admiralty, and a rather natural though unfortunate attitude of "for God sake don't bother me" towards him, resulted in nothing being done. So he had to go back to expend coal, avoid submarines, and watch for an ever decreasingly possible raid with the uncomfortable feeling that his Squadron was doing little more than proving itself an expense.

Before the growing threat of the submarine the Admiralty, however, suddenly one day woke up to the danger to which they were exposed and sent him down orders to

* Memoirs.

change his line of patrol. They wished him to confine his activities to a small space between Land's End and the Scillies.

*Such a proceeding seemed to me the height of folly, for by tying my movements to so small an area it was impossible for me to regulate them so that I should never be on the same line at the same time any two days running, a plan which I had carried out ever since I had resumed the patrol; it would only therefore have been a matter of time for the submarines to have marked my movements if they wished and eventually sunk one of my ships. Now it is justifiable to run risks if some object is to be gained, but not so if the risks incurred can lead to no possible result, which would have been the case had the Admiralty plan been carried out.

Begging, therefore, that their Lordships should not insist on their orders until he had an opportunity of placing his objections before them, an opportunity which would occur in a couple of days' time when his flagship would be in harbour to coal, he went up to London on January 24, and remonstrated with Admiral Oliver, then the Chief of the Staff. He saw my point of view, but gave me an insight into the official mind by saying to me, "We can't have one of the four-funnellers (*Euryalus* and *Bacchante*) sunk—the public would not stand it!" That was my opinion too, but my reasons were not precisely theirs!

The result was that the Admiralty orders were cancelled, but although the plans for the trawler patrol were not actually turned down neither were they accepted.

There followed a trying and exasperating time—awaiting orders which never came—lying idle with nothing to do.

Plymouth. H.M.S. "Euryalus." Jan. 21. The Admiralty truly seem at sixes and sevens, and for certain it is they do not know their own mind. I have been receiving contradictory and impossible telegrams for the last two days and am quite in the dark as to what is likely to happen. My scheme,

although I believe approved by them, I cannot get them to actually say "yes" or "no" to, and yet they are giving me instructions as though it was all in working order. They are hopeless, and confusion seems to reign. Meantime I cannot get away from here. *Euryalus* has more defects than was expected and has to remain in dockyard hands—so to-morrow I am off again, though in what ship I hardly know yet. It really is a dog's life and one wouldn't say a word of complaint if only it were unavoidable, but it is not. You know as a rule I don't worry, but I can't help worrying now because they are playing the fool so. However, matters can't remain in this state much longer. . . .

H.M.S. "Talbot." At sea. Feb. 1. Still in a state of uncertainty. . . . I'm beginning to loathe the Navy and wish I never entered it. It is Fisher that has wrought the change. He it was that made it impossible for gentlemen and honest people to serve at the Admiralty, and now I suspect he'll take good care that I never get a chance of doing anything. The very fact of its being war-time ties one's hands so terribly—one can only do what one is told to the best of one's ability. But, all the same, I can't help feeling that any ability that I may possess is not being made use of by the Powers that be.

I saw Lady Sturdee at Devonport. She was awaiting Sturdee's return. What he is going to do, I don't know. She was very indignant with Fisher and Co. and had long stories of how badly they had been behaving to her husband. It is apparently difficult to find any naval officer afloat who is satisfied.

H.M.S. "Talbot." Feb. 2. I have just received further contradictory orders from the Admiralty—the only result of which is that I am proceeding into Plymouth apparently to remain there! So now I'm on my way in, and I suppose I shall hear something more to-morrow. The Admiralty are cowards, morally, apparently frightened to accept my ideas. Well, they're making a nice mess of it.

H.M.S. "Talbot." Feb. 3. Sixes and Sevens—that is the only way that I can describe the situation. I am lying in Plymouth Sound awaiting developments and further orders. The Admiralty don't know what they want. I do know what I want and have said so over and over again, but it looks to me very much as if there is nobody at the Admiralty

who can say "yes" or "no." Well, there it is, and so far as I personally am concerned I can only say it is less uncomfortable lying in Plymouth Sound than it would be at sea since it's blowing very hard. But as I'm in instant readiness to go to sea I can't leave the ship. I wonder if somebody will wake up at Admiralty before long? However, the whole situation has passed out of my hands so I can only sit down and await orders. Altogether you will gather that I'm not in a very contented state of mind, and it's difficult having to bottle one's feelings up, which of course I must do on board. It would never do to let all my people see what I feel. . . .

H.M.S. "Euryalus." Feb. 4. . . . My poor ships are showing wear and tear and I am gradually getting more attenuated. So here I am stuck and goodness only knows what may happen. There is only one certainty and that is that chaos reigns at Whitehall.

The *Bacchante* had been withdrawn on January 29th, and on February 5th

the only news I have to-day is what I have been expecting for some days, that the *Euryalus* is to be taken away from me. She is going abroad. I liked her so much and all the people in her. I am awfully sorry at losing Burmester and Marriott, both such good fellows and good officers. However, there it is. It's the fortunes of war and there is nothing to be done. . . .

H.M.S. "Eclipse." Feb. 8. This inaction will soon drive me mad. Still lying in Plymouth Sound without news. Absolute silence on the part of the Admiralty. I have told them over and over again that I am of no use here—my Squadron attenuated, my ships developing defects and yet nothing. There is so much that might be done.

H.M.S. "Eclipse." Feb. 9. . . . Still no news. Here I am doing nothing. The *Euryalus* sailed yesterday. I was very sad to see the last of her. I shall miss Burmester and Marriott very much indeed. They also were sad. They did not at all want to go off. Weather appalling. I have been here for more than a week, doing absolutely nothing, and hearing nothing, and knowing nothing.

His wife, who had gone down to Plymouth to join him, found him in a state bordering on desperation. Pacing up

and down the Hoe, he poured out to her all his bitterness and distress at being thus relegated in the middle of the war to total inactivity.

But at an early hour next morning, February 13th, he was woken up by the arrival of a telegram ordering him to report himself at the Admiralty that afternoon.

*Up to London I accordingly went and saw the First Lord, who informed me that it was proposed to send an expedition out to East Africa for the purpose of capturing the *Königsberg* who had taken refuge up the Rufigi River—the naval forces on the spot not being of sufficient strength for this purpose. The plan was so far only outlined, but I was to have a brigade of Marines, and the *Königsberg* once captured or destroyed, a new station was to be formed under my command, entirely separate from the South African station then under the command of my old shipmate Rear-Admiral King Hall and a vigorous blockade of the coast established.

He was perfectly overjoyed at the prospect of this new appointment and his spirits rose as high as they had been low the day before. He hurriedly returned to Plymouth in order to turn over the command of his diminished and ever-diminishing Squadron to Captain Hutton, the S.N.O., to gather together such effects and belongings as he should want and return to London bringing with him Captain Mitchell of H.M.S. *Eclipse*, whom he proposed taking to East Africa. The morning of next day, February 16th, was spent hastily trying to lay in stores of tropical clothing, sun-helmets, etc., and in endeavouring to obtain instructions from the Admiralty. Both of these tasks seemed difficult enough, but the latter proved well-nigh impossible; nobody was able to give him any help and all seemed entirely unaware of what was going on. The whole scheme appeared nebulous in the extreme. He realized that he would not learn anything definite until he had seen the First Lord, which it was arranged he should do at 3 p.m. In the meantime his

Secretary Paymaster Manisty was forcibly taken from him to fill a post at the Admiralty much to his regret, for I like Manisty very much. He is so equable and intelligent and never at a loss, and withal very quiet and unpushing.

His regrets were, however, mitigated on finding that his old friend and Secretary Miller was now available, who then joined his Staff, on which he was to remain for the whole duration of the war, only leaving him in 1919.

*Before going to the Admiralty I lunched with the Broughams in Chesham Place. In the middle of the meal I was called to the telephone and curtly informed by some unknown person at the Admiralty that the East African expedition was off! My feelings can be better imagined than expressed! No Squadron—the arrangements for East Africa almost complete—and without a command! I repaired to the Admiralty at 3 p.m. in a towering rage, only to be told that the First Lord was not in the building and that nobody knew when he would be in, I was, however, quite determined not to leave without some sort of explanation, and after some delay at last waylaid Churchill in the passage and accompanied him to his room, but before I could open my mouth he informed me that the project was postponed, that it had that morning been decided to force the Dardanelles, that the island of Lemnos was to be made the base of the operations, that he wished me to proceed out there at once—the next day in fact—that I should probably be the Governor of the island and that further orders were to follow me immediately, which by the way they never did!

It was whilst I was in the Naval Secretary's room after having said good-bye to the First Lord that I met Lord Fisher for the last time.

Now, I had not spoken to Lord Fisher since the year 1908, when he had proposed to me that I should become Naval Secretary, plainly indicating that such an appointment would be a gross job and that I should have to pay for it by being his creature. I had written a letter to him indignantly refusing to accept the appointment under such conditions, though at that time it was the one which I wished

for most, and since then all communications between us had been severed.

"Why, it's Wemyss," exclaimed Lord Fisher, as if it were the most extraordinary thing that I should be there, and as if he had suddenly come across his dearest friend. "Yes, sir, it's Wemyss," I replied, ignoring his outstretched hand. "How are you, my dear Wemyss? It's ages since I saw you," he went on, still keeping his hand outstretched towards me. "Very well, thank you, sir," I replied, still ignoring his hand; but this would not satisfy him. Once more he repeated, "How are you, my dear Wemyss?" thrusting his hand still farther towards me and almost seizing mine, which had till now remained limp by my side. It was impossible for me under the circumstances to attempt to retain my attitude of reserve. After all, he was First Sea Lord and I a Junior Rear-Admiral, and there was a mighty war raging, so I took his hand and could not help laughing as I said, "Well, the war brings funny people together." And so that little incident closed and he wished me good-bye and good-fortune, but gave me no orders or any indications as to the line of conduct he desired me to pursue.

The lack of orders or instructions on the part of the Admiralty caused me some annoyance at the time, but when I eventually reached the scene of my future activities I found this lack was not without its advantages, and I was extremely glad that I could consider myself a free agent, able to carry out my duties without the handicap of any limitations beyond those of my own conscience. It was a freedom for which I was to be truly grateful in the future.

From the patrol of the Channel to East Africa, from East Africa to the Dardanelles, such were the changes of plans which had been proposed within 48 hours.

It was late in the afternoon by the time he left the Admiralty and, starting next morning, he had but very few hours to collect a Staff and make the many necessary preparations such as changing his tropical outfit for one more suited to his future destination, while, to make matters worse, he suddenly developed a violent toothache necessitating a midnight visit to the dentist. But superhuman efforts and

unlimited good will successfully overcame all difficulties, and at 12.30 on February 17th Wemyss, accompanied by his Staff, Flag Captain Mitchell, Flag Lieutenant Commander Bevan, and Secretary Paymaster Miller, left for the Dardanelles via Paris, Marseilles, and Malta.

CHAPTER VII

GALLIPOLI—LANDING

A JOURNEY of thirteen hours with a very stormy crossing brought them to Paris only to find there was no train for Marseilles before evening. Wemyss called at the Ministry of Marine but could hear nothing of French co-operation in the Dardanelles. He visited his friends and acquaintances—his women friends that is to say, for every man was at the front—and was much impressed by their brave and confident bearing. Paris was desolate; its streets filled with women in deepest mourning—a great contrast to the gay city he remembered only six short months ago; but the spirit was indomitable.

The few hours spent at Malta, where he and his Staff embarked on H.M.S. *Dartmouth*, enabled him to consult Admiral Limpus, till recently Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Navy, who appeared very optimistic, assuring him that once the forts of the Dardanelles were demolished Turkey as a political unit would cease to exist; he moreover was persuaded that the Turks hated the Germans and would probably refuse to fight for them.

H.M.S. *Dartmouth* brought Wemyss and his Staff to Mudros on February 24th, after stopping at Tenedos to visit Vice-Admiral Carden, commanding the Squadron which was blockading the Straits with Rear-Admiral de Robeck in H.M.S. *Vengeance*, Second in Command. The bombardment of the outer forts had already begun.

During his few minutes' interviews with the First Lord, the latter had informed him that he was to be Governor of the island of Lemnos, there to form a base at Mudros for the impending naval and military operations, and that he would receive detailed instructions. He had heard no more and hoped that Admiral Carden might enlighten him further, but beyond ascertaining that it was not the island of Lemnos

but only the town of Mudros and part of the harbour over which he was to exercise jurisdiction, Admiral Carden could tell him nothing; he was completely ignorant of any plans for combined naval and military operations—10,000 troops, he said, were expected shortly, and there was a brigade of Marines under the command of Colonel Trotman in two transports in Mudros Bay ready to demolish the forts. That was all he knew.

It was not long before Wemyss began to realize the extraordinarily anomalous position he had been placed in by the Government and for which his studies of international law had hardly prepared him. As he wrote: *appointed in London Governor of an island which on his arrival he found was being governed by its own legitimate officials, administering a town over which he had no legal authority, commanding a base situated on territory neutral in theory if not in fact and for whose safety and well-being he was responsible, he had been kept in complete ignorance as to the political situation. Was Greece a secret ally or a neutral whose neutrality was being flagrantly violated? However, he had received no instructions, he determined to ask for none but to choose his own way to "salvation or damnation."

Lemnos he knew well. Over and over again had he been there as lieutenant in the *Undaunted*, later on in the *Astraea*. It was at Lemnos he had first joined the *Suffolk* in 1905. He had shot partridges on its hills and picnicked on its shores; but when on that February morning he began to understand what was expected of him, and viewed the large harbour now almost empty, the insignificant little town with its one small wooden pier, the total absence of all resources, the poverty of the adjoining country, he could not help marvelling at the mentality of Whitehall.

He was to be Governor of Mudros and Senior Naval Officer of a base port—yet on his arrival he found no Flag-

* "The Navy in the Dardanelles."

ship awaiting him, no depôt ship even, and no accommodation on shore; but he remained confident and cheerful. After a short stay in the *Blenheim* he and his Staff transhipped on to the former Constantinople stationnaire *Imogene* and the *Hussar*, an old gunboat converted into a yacht for the C.-in-C. of the Mediterranean Fleet, moored alongside each other, and it was amongst these cramped and uncomfortable surroundings that the multiplicity of business that goes with the base of a great Fleet had to be carried on. Though full of solicitude for his Staff, who had to work under such trying conditions, he treated personal inconvenience very lightly indeed and for himself never complained; on the contrary, sailing in the Mediterranean (he wrote to his wife) is very different to sailing in the Channel—especially since there are no submarines in these waters. At least those that are here are friendly and not of the enemy. . . . I am pining to get to my work, which I am quite sure I shall infinitely prefer to that beastly patrol.

Indeed, according to members of his Staff, most of the time he was supremely happy. He had the administration of the district to direct.

The civil administration is easy enough, because really there is nothing to administer! The Greek employés remain at their post and everything remains *in statu quo*, so long that is as I can get my own way and do all that I wish to do. . . .

. . . The first thing was to make certain that the telegraph line was to be relied upon, and since that part running over the land was worked by the Greek Government officials, I felt no certainty about the business. I consequently summoned the head man of the Eastern Telegraph Co., explained the situation to him and asked him if he was prepared to guarantee the line being kept going if it were handed to him. He replied in the affirmative, so then the business was to get the Greek officials to consent to this, because I am naturally anxious to have these people on my side and not working against me, and I didn't want to do the thing brutally or by force. Well, I succeeded somehow,

and this arrangement worked well for a few days; but I was much amused when yesterday a Greek destroyer arrived with any amount of competent officials from Greece—Government officials sent by the Greek Government with many humble apologies and promises that they will keep the line going. Also a competent Englishman, an official of the E.T.C., to look after his part of the line—so now I have everything I want and all is friendly.

On account of his rather delicate position his one aim was to keep on good terms with the Greek officials, an aim he was most successful in realizing.

I am obliged of course to keep a very sharp eye on all persons arriving here for the safety not only of the troops and ships but also of the civil population. Now since the agreement with Greece for our occupation of this place is a secret—a secret which everyone shares!—and since my appointment is, so to speak, *sub rosa*, if I take any drastic measures towards securing this safety I may come up against the Greek authorities. For this I am quite prepared, but naturally wish to be backed up by the authorities at home. But do you think they give me necessary assurances? Of course not. However, I have diddled them all by managing to get the Greek authorities to *ask* me to take certain responsibilities.

I need not tell you that I am delighted with the results of my diplomacy and am now in the position of conferring a favour on the Greeks instead of their conferring a favour upon me. . . .

. . . The Greek authorities are now entirely acquiescent in my taking everything out of their hands. I don't think they could have dealt with the situation themselves. . . . It is amusing to find oneself a sort of dictator, turning out whom one pleases, improving the condition of the inhabitants, substituting law and order for licence and chaos.

At this time he had received a most welcome addition to his Staff in the person of Mr. H. Luke, belonging to the Government of Cyprus, whose intelligence and knowledge of local conditions were to prove invaluable.

A great stand-by too was Admiral Limpus and the Malta Dockyard. "No matter what we ask for," Wemyss used to say, "Limpus will always provide it or suggest a good alternative."

From the outset the one great anxiety had been the shortage of fresh water—for the actual supply only sufficed for the wants of the local inhabitants. Wemyss had telegraphed to the Admiralty for condensing ships, only to be told that there were none to send and that he must make use of the water on the island, which "they understood was plentiful." Possibly it was—in the hills—but to be made available would require time and labour; the latter was non-existent, and as to the former the troops were arriving immediately. It was then that Malta came to the rescue and sent fresh water in the double bottoms of every ship that was dispatched to Mudros, thus saving the situation.

Only just in time, however. Admiral Carden had computed the expected troops at 10,000, but when General Birdwood commanding the Australians and New Zealanders arrived on March 1st from Egypt, Wemyss was to learn that their number was nearer 40,000 than 10,000. Together they landed to choose suitable sites for camping-grounds which the shortage of water rendered difficult.

Together, too, they conferred with Admiral Carden at Tenedos; the Admiral was evidently reaching the conclusion that mine-sweeping was rendered impossible by the enemy's concealed guns and mobile batteries which would have to be destroyed before any progress could be made. This, however, could not be done without military assistance, a decision which did not lie in their hands but in those of the Government.

From the very beginning Wemyss had recognized that the whole success of the undertaking depended on close co-operation between the Army and the Navy. He was in consequence very insistent that a naval officer of some

standing should accompany General Birdwood back to Egypt, so as to keep in touch with G.H.Q. and help them to develop their plans. But this point of view Admiral Carden could not or would not share.

So convinced, however, was Wemyss of the urgent necessity of this step that, understaffed as he was, he sent his own Flag-Captain, Captain Mitchell, to Egypt with General Birdwood. Captain Mitchell never rejoined him but remained attached to the Army for the whole campaign.

On March 4th arrived the vanguard of the Army in the shape of 5,000 Australians, 4,000 of whom had to remain afloat on account of the lack of water.

The Australians are the most magnificent body of men I have ever seen. I thought the Canadians very fine as raw material, but these men are even finer. One really feels proud of one's race and I am beginning to see in actuality the truth of many of Chamberlain's remarks in "Foundations of XIXth Century." They are wild, of course, but such pleasant-looking fellows and always look as if they were pleased to see one.

Lemnos. March 8. . . . My work seems to increase each day. Of course difficulties arise, nothing insurmountable, but the real trouble, as usual, emanates from the authorities at home. They will not say what they want, nor give me any idea of what their ultimate goal is. Now with 40,000 men and no knowledge of how they are to be used, you can imagine that it is not easy for me out here to foresee what may be required, especially as I don't know what they are bringing. However, I have taken the bull by the horns and am preparing for all eventualities. It is amusing going one's own way, and I am ignoring the Admiralty to a great degree and, so to speak, helping myself to all I want without asking for it.

Lemnos. March 9. Imagine my feelings when this morning appears on the scene a French General who informs me that he is the precursor of a French army who apparently has been told that *I* will supply them with all they need. Truly the ways of those in authority are beyond thought. This

wretched island is evidently supposed to be a land flowing with milk and honey *and* water. But I am now in the mood that it rather amuses me, for I have no doubt but that I shall manage. Fisher said it was a big thing they were sending me out to, I think they little imagined *how* big. . . . It would be all plain sailing were there the proper Staff and appliances, but these latter are all snatched up anyhow as best one may. Mitchell I have sent off to Egypt so as to get into personal touch with the military authorities there. I hope he may be back in a few days' time.

The Royal Naval Division, some 8,500 men, reached Mudros on board the *Franconia* on March 12th, their commanding officer Major-General Paris, R.M.A., informing Wemyss on arrival that his troops had been embarked in such a manner that the whole force would have to be disembarked, reorganized, and re-embarked, which he hoped to do at Mudros; so apparently did the Authorities at home, so indeed did the Admiralty, and Wemyss had some difficulty in convincing them that with neither wharves, nor cranes, nor landing-piers, nor even a sufficiency of boats, this would be a sheer impossibility. Owing to their chaotic embarkation, therefore, the whole fleet of transports had to be turned back and sent to Egypt, where at Port Said or Alexandria they could be reorganized and re-stowed.

It was beginning to dawn upon Wemyss that the naval and military plans which he imagined were being withheld from him did not so far exist and that the campaign was being undertaken with a lack of preparation and a want of perception which made him feel that unless he were ready to organize everything himself on the spot this great enterprise could only end in utter failure.

The work piles up, but not the means to cope with it. I have innumerable matters to see to—landing of troops, provisioning them, providing stores for all manner and kind of vessels, work on shore in connection with the village, water, telegraph, etc., etc.—something new cropping up

every moment and I have neither officers nor men enough to cope with it all. Truly the Admiralty are marvellous. Luckily for them and for the nation they are marvellously served and officers and men work like niggers. They (the Admiralty) never seem to think of necessities. "Go there and do so and so," they seem to imagine is enough to get it done.

He never spared himself.

Day after day (according to his Flag Lieutenant) he would be off somewhere in a boat, alone, or with a member of his Staff—Luke, or Harold Escombe or Lionel Wells or myself, or later Fitzmaurice, trusting far more to interviews and personal interest and influence than in documents and carrying everywhere the cheerful greeting and friendly smile that became as well known as the eyeglass itself. He visited piers under construction, camps, transports, headquarters, batteries, mayors, men-of-war without considering anything but pressing forward the work in hand.

Meanwhile the bombardment of the forts was being continued; the difficulty of the moment was clearing the mine-fields.

*The men are splendid. Volunteers were called for the other day for a particularly nasty and dangerous job (sweeping the mine-fields) and every man volunteered. Certainly there is no lack of self-sacrifice on the part of the rank and file. One can only admire them and wish to God that all this loss of life were not necessary.

On March 16th, in response to a message of the Vice-Admiral lying off Tenedos, I proceeded there in a destroyer and found him ill and obliged to give up the command. The situation thus created was a delicate one, for his departure would leave me the Senior Officer, since Rear-Admiral de Robeck, his second in Command of the Squadron operating against the forts, though older than me and Senior to me in the Service, was actually my Junior on the Rear-Admirals' List. Here was I, organizing the base, an arduous task, inevitably bound to suffer from a change of command, whilst de Robeck was in the middle of a complicated operation in full possession of and knowing its most

* "The Navy in the Dardanelles," p. 39.

intricate details of which I was completely ignorant; yet surely the Senior Officer's place was with the Squadron at the front. I discussed the situation from every point of view with him and Commodore Keyes, his Chief of the Staff, and eventually made up my mind that no other course was open to me except to return to Mudros to carry on my work there, leaving the operations in de Robeck's hands. I accordingly telegraphed my decision to the Admiralty and added that if they wished to make de Robeck an Acting Vice-Admiral, a step in my opinion very desirable on account of the presence of the French Rear-Admiral rendering the question of command otherwise difficult, I was ready to serve under de Robeck's orders. It is hardly necessary to state that I did not come to this conclusion without considerable heart-burning and a bitter feeling of disappointment, but I had no doubt in my mind that under the peculiar circumstances the decision was the right one to take, and it had the happy result that for the remainder of the campaign de Robeck and I worked together with the greatest cordiality and friendship. And I returned to Mudros, sore and disappointed I must confess, yet conscious of the correctness of my conduct.

Meanwhile Sir Ian Hamilton had arrived to take command in chief of the military operations.

I am pleased to think that at last the army here has a head, because up till now nobody has been able to come to any decision at all.

The next day, April 17th, Wemyss took part in a Council of War on board the *Queen Elizabeth*, in which de Robeck, now a Vice-Admiral and his Senior Officer, had hoisted his flag. It was there decided that another attack on the forts was to take place to cover a further attempt to sweep the mine-fields. This resulted in the naval battle fought on the 18th, which led to the loss of the *Irresistible*, the *Ocean*, and the *Bouvet*, and very nearly to that of the *Inflexible*—only saved by the fine seamanship of her Captain (Phillimore).

When Wemyss returned to Tenedos on the following day he found Admiral de Robeck saddened and very depressed, speaking about "disaster," an expression he entreated him not to use, while he did his best to cheer him up.

This action finally put an end to all hopes of forcing the Straits without military assistance and all operations had to be postponed until a combined attack could be developed and perfected. The decision was endorsed by a conference of Admirals and Generals held on board the *Queen Elizabeth* in Mudros Harbour on March 22nd which General Birdwood, returned from Egypt with Captain Mitchell the day before, also attended.

The Army and Navy found themselves in perfect accord, and we each went our way to our several tasks, mine being, in addition to the command of the base, the preparation of the naval part of the combined operation.

Since March 11th the French Army had been pouring into Mudros.

It is a curious sight on shore. English and French camps pitched side by side and the difference between them very apparent. . . . The differences in national character come out very strongly when brought so close together in such a small space; but all have one thing in common, a good-tempered gaiety which is good to see.

With their Commander, General d'Amade, a chivalrous, brave officer, Wemyss was soon on the very best of terms. The General spoke to him with great frankness and did not hide his conviction that landing on the Peninsula would be a mistake. According to him the best way of helping the Navy to get through the Straits would be to land the Army at Adramyti Bay, capture the Constantinople-Smyrna railway at the point nearest the landing-place, march straight on Constantinople, and seize the inner key of the Dardanelles.

Wemyss, always open to new ideas, went so far as to promise him a reconnoitring party, but all operations in Asia Minor being banned by orders from England the plan had to be dropped.

The preparations for the forthcoming attack were now being actively pushed forward, no small matter when the organization necessary for moving an Armada of over 200 vessels with its accompaniment of lighters, pontoons, etc., out of the harbour to their stations is considered. To add to the difficulties the weather broke up and gales of wind retarded the work considerably.

Mar. 23. Truly mine is a boisterous Kingdom so far as the weather is concerned, I should say, for the inhabitants seem peaceful enough. But the weather! An incessant gale of wind for a week now, and it has done much damage. One torpedo-boat wrecked—all the crew saved I am happy to say—several of my cherished lighters sunk and tugs which I had bought at Athens and the Piraeus have not turned up! You can imagine how matters have been delayed better than I can describe it to you. The confusion that has been caused by the slipshod manner in which the troops have been sent out from England is something awful. The ships packed anyhow. Things which belong to one battalion stowed in the bottom of the hold of a ship which carries another, and so on all through. I cannot imagine what they have been thinking about. . . . And all this for an expedition the success of which absolutely depends on accuracy of detail. Well, we shall no doubt put it straight, but it requires time and patience. . . . Oh my dear, how my heart goes out to the ancient Israelites who had to make bricks without straw! If you could only guess what the fatuous authorities seem to expect out of us here from nothing. They seem to think that because they have the use of this harbour from the Greeks and that because I am here with the title of Governor and S.N.O. that they have established a base! Good God! I have nothing. And so we struggle along and truly I am surprised at the results we obtain and I feel lost in admiration at the resource of my people. . . .

He had the gift of inspiring his Staff and those who worked under him with whole-hearted devotion, for Captain Bevan writes:

Throughout that long year 1915 I hardly left the Admiral for long. Anxiety and responsibility never made him petulant or peevish; rather did they magnify his fine qualities as a leader. I recollect forgetting one day—through falling to sleep at night with a bundle of signals in my hand—to send a destroyer to meet Vice-Admiral de Robeck. A protest arrived, and early in the morning I confessed. "Never mind now what you have forgotten; what must we do to put things right? that is the question." Could anyone fail to work for such a chief?

His Staff at this time began to increase and now consisted of eleven people, all of us as full of work as ever.

Amongst them was Commander Unwin, whose name will ever be connected with the *River Clyde*.

At one of the joint meetings of the Staffs he had put forward a proposal for landing a large number of men from a specially prepared ship which was to be run on to the beach. He believed that if the landings were well defended and the enemy's fire reserved until the boats were close but few of them would ever reach the shore at all, and his plan was conceived to ensure the troops being landed. His project, however, was viewed with no favour by the Staff, who wanted to turn it down. When, however, he laid it before Wemyss the latter was much attracted, seeing in it, besides a possible shelter for wounded and a pier from which stores and guns might be landed, etc. Wemyss therefore threw himself with all his wonted ardour into the scheme, to which he won over the military authorities and caused a suitable ship, the *River Clyde*, to be chartered, charging Commander Unwin, to whom he gave the command, to fit her out. He was to cover himself with immortal glory.

By the middle of April the reorganized transports were returning from Egypt, and so was Sir Ian Hamilton, accompanied by the H.Q.S., and General Hunter-Weston, who during the forthcoming attack was to act together with Wemyss at Helles. Their continual intercourse during their close collaboration was to ripen into fast and mutual esteem and friendship.

All preparations were now being completed with as much speed as their complexity and amplitude would allow. Every ingenuity their resources permitted had been applied to the transports to facilitate and quicken the disembarkation of the troops, and the troops themselves underwent as much boat-drill as was possible.

How different was the aspect of Mudros to what it had been two months ago when Wemyss and his Staff first beheld it. Then the slumberous Aegean port was nearly empty; now it called to mind rather some busy centre such as Liverpool or Southampton, crowded as it was with vessels of every description—men-of-war, hospital ships, tugs, lighters, and pontoons—while its then desolate shores and poverty-stricken little town were now teeming with life, activity, and prosperity.

By April 19th, all was at length ready—plans, arrangements and orders perfected, completed and issued and Wemyss transferred his flag to H.M.S. *Euryalus*, which had left him under such dreary circumstances at Plymouth only a few weeks ago. Since then the *Euryalus* and *Bacchante* had formed part of the East Indies Command, till at the beginning of March the Admiralty telegraphed that they were both to be detached for the operations for the capture of Constantinople and would be absent from Admiral Peirse's flag for a few weeks!

A somewhat optimistic forecast.

Great was Wemyss' delight to find himself once more surrounded by officers and men whom he had grown to know

so well and to like so much during those weary months in the Channel. That this was mutual is evidenced by Admiral Burmester, who writes:

In due course *Euryalus* arrived in Mudros, where I was delighted to find R. E. W. as Senior Officer in charge of the base, and still more pleased to learn presently that in the important part he would play in the forthcoming landing he would again hoist his flag in *Euryalus*. For the active operations in preparation I became therefore once more his Flag Captain, and was fully employed under his orders in preparing the plans, orders and arrangements for that part of the operation—the landing at Helles—which was placed under his particular direction.

He must have been all this time smothered in other administrative work inseparable from his base command; he was, I know, absurdly under-staffed, he had the searching problems to tackle of effecting and covering the landing of troops on unsheltered beaches against certain and strong opposition, and he was continually called on to settle questions or to make arrangements of the most difficult and diverse nature, yet I never saw him other than untroubled, confident, serene and quick to see the humour of the occasionally fantastic events that occurred during the days prior to the embarkation.

I should say that he never allowed himself to be tied to his office desk for one moment more than was essential; he infinitely preferred the personal and practical touch to be gained by visiting at all and any hours the work in progress under his orders and the officers and men who were doing it, while he contrived to assure his subordinates of his trust and support by permitting them a freedom in matters of detail which stimulated their efforts, and certainly tended to produce the best results.

He was quick to see and appreciate the value of suggestions, and the conversion and use of the *River Clyde* as a troop-carrier, proposed by Commander Unwin, was achieved as the result of his immediate and persistent support of a scheme which others might have turned down as unpractical.

At a meeting on board the *Queen Elizabeth* on the 19th it had been decided that the attack should be delivered on the 23rd, but a strong breeze springing up on the 20th caused its delay till a steadily rising glass on Friday 23rd gave promise of favourable conditions.

The preliminary movement began that afternoon by the departure of the three transports carrying the battalions forming the advance parties for Helles and Morto Bay bound for an anchorage off Tenedos, followed by the *Euryalus*, *Implacable*, *Cornwallis* and *River Clyde*.

*My feelings as I stood on the bridge of the *Euryalus* slowly steaming out to sea to meet the unknown were those of confidence, hope and pride. The time of uncertainty, of preparation and of waiting were over. The hour of action had arrived and that these stimulating thoughts pervaded the minds of those thousands of men collected together in this comparatively small space was clearly shown by the enthusiasm which prevailed. Cheering bodies of men must ever produce an exhilarating effect, and when the cheers, as they did on this occasion, came ringing over the water from troops on the eve of action, from men about to take part in an undertaking so desperate and fraught with such tremendous issues, the impressions evoked cannot be otherwise than emotional.

The sounds of the British cheering dying away as we receded from them was taken up by our French comrades, in the outer roads, symbol of the solidarity uniting the two nations.

And thus, with the cheers of brave men ringing in their ears, the expedition left Mudros and steamed over to Tenedos.

April 23. H.M.S. "Euryalus." I begin this letter in peace and quiet on board my old *Euryalus*. I wonder what I shall have to tell you before I end it. Well, all these weeks I have been preparing and organizing for landing the army on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and now here I am on my way over

* "The Navy in the Dardanelles," p. 65.

from Lemnos to Tenedos, the first stage of the operation, and to-morrow we leave Tenedos to attack on Sunday morning. The Scheme is audaciously bold, and I think we have done all we can to help to make it a success. But the authorities at home! They seem to think that it is a picnic party for all the assistance they have given us. Of course the initial mistake was bombarding before we had an army to land. Had we had troops to pour in after the first bombardment the whole thing would have been finished and done in a very short time. But we hadn't. The ignorance of the Admiralty is nothing less than criminal. Then this hastily devised plan of sending troops out to Lemnos without an organization or staff to do it. The whole of the troops had to be unpacked and re-packed again, and this had to be done at Alexandria. Then the whole thing had to be reorganized by me out here, and I had no staff! By beseeching and telegraphing we got 12 officers out from England, and we should have 56! and everything else in the same proportion. You can imagine now why my letters have been so short and scrappy. However, that part of it is all finished, and now we are going to utilize what we have created. But alas! we have given the Turks, or rather the Germans, time to prepare and the landing will be a very different thing now to what it would have been a month ago. We have 18,000 regular troops—splendid—over 30,000 Australians—splendid material but their worth has to be proved, 18 to 20,000 French troops and about 15,000 of "Winston's Army." In all about 80 to 85,000 men. Never in the history of the world has such an expedition sailed—never has a big campaign been so hastily organized and got together, and never has such an undertaking got so little consideration given it from home. I believe we shall succeed simply because everybody is determined that it *must*. There is no other alternative. Certainly the generals are full of dash and determination, and everybody, naval and military, is full of the right sort of spirit. Sunday will be a wonderful day, but we *must* have fine weather. To-night I feel a great load off my shoulders—the hard *thinking* work is over and finished and to-morrow morning I shall be as fit as a lark. Well, the army landed, we then have to finish the Dardanelles forts, which is made a *comparatively* easy

job with the troops on shore to help us. And then for Constantinople. . . .

In the meantime my work is extraordinarily mixed. I am still Governor of Mudros, where I have left a locum tenens *pro tem*. I am landing or helping to land the army—I am organizing the supply of the troops and besides this commanding a Squadron from this ship. Truly a multifarious business. It's a wonderful experience, but I have good fellows all round me and they all do well. We want just a little bit of luck and we shall make history.

"To the great adventure," was the toast given out at dinner on the following evening, when, after embarking General Hunter-Weston commanding the 29th Division and his Staff, and the 1st Battalion of Lancashire Fusiliers at Tenedos, the *Euryalus* steamed at slow speed under a setting moon and a smooth sea across to the landing beaches at Gallipoli. That night he slept soundly till awakened at dawn, when the disembarkation of the troops began.

Throughout all that day (writes his Flag Captain, now Admiral Sir R. Burmester) the Admiral saw to it that the utmost support that could be afforded by the Navy to the landed forces was given—the *Euryalus* was moved from point to point to ensure his close personal supervision. When later in the day the arrangements for dealing with the wounded on shore, and for re-embarking and evacuating them, proved inadequate, the Admiral, who was greatly exercised, spent ceaseless energy and effort to remedy with all the resources at the Navy's disposal shortcomings for which he was in no way responsible. I have never seen him more moved, and he accomplished much that but for his personal intervention and insistence would have been left undone.

Tuesday, April 27. H.M.S. "Euryalus." A short lull in the proceedings which I take advantage of to write a line. Sunday was indeed a marvellous day. We attacked at 6 a.m., and by 9 a.m. actually had a fairly secure footing on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Now, even two days afterwards, I can hardly believe it, and I know now that I really never believed that we should succeed. So far as I was concerned I was determined that everything should be done to avert

disaster, and, thank God, everybody in that was alike and the result is that the apparently impossible has been attained. Look at the map and then try and imagine that we actually landed 6,000 men on two small beaches on the end of the Peninsula in a few minutes—on beaches which were one mass of barbed-wire entanglements and covered from every quarter by maxims and well-concealed rifle fire from trenches which were invisible. The Lancashire Fusiliers covered themselves with glory and so did the bluejackets that pulled them in the boats. On one of the beaches the first lot landing were practically annihilated, and sinking boats with nothing but dead in them were the result. Luckily, thank God, I had fitted up an old collier to hold 2,000 men and she was run on shore on this beach, but the fire brought to bear was so absolutely annihilating that the men couldn't get out. All the first ones that tried were killed. Eventually they remained in her till dark, when they were able to land. Had it not been for this I really doubt if we should have captured the end of the Peninsula and been where we now are.

April 29. H.M.S. "Euryalus." . . . I take a few minutes off to go on with my letter. I shall have to write a separate letter altogether telling you about this business. In the meantime the battle still continues. Our people are advancing slowly. They are, I know, very tired, but every moment we are putting on shore more guns, more men and more ammunition, and I sincerely hope many more men will come from England. I am sure we shall want them. Our losses must be very, very severe, but one hasn't had time to count. Everything has to be pushed forward so rapidly. Don't think my letter stupid, it is simply that I have not time to describe anything. Thank God! I shall have the pleasure of getting two of our officers the V.C. for acts of gallantry and self-abnegation seldom if ever equalled. There must be many such, but only these two have so far come under my notice. I do hope we may break the Turkish resistance soon. If we do, and can get at Constantinople, it should, I am sure, help very greatly to bring this beastly war to an end, I can't help feeling glad that I have had something to say towards the success of this extraordinary undertaking. So after all, *Euryalus*, with Burmester, Marriott and myself in her, actually led the attack!!

May 1. H.M.S. "Euryalus." One word to say that all goes well. I don't see when the hard work is to cease. Troops and guns always to be disembarked, and more to come of course. There has been no fighting for a couple of days. Both sides exhausted, I believe. I fear our losses are heavy indeed—nearly 50% I should think. But we have our foot well on the Peninsula and they can't turn us out now. I don't think people in England can possibly grasp the magnitude of the job we have undertaken. I don't expect that they grasp that we have done the almost impossible. An order of Liman v. Sanders was found on the body of a German officer to-day in which he said the Peninsula had been made impregnable and that no troops could ever effect a landing. Truly the British soldier (and sailor) is a marvellous creature. I have been looking at some of the trenches to-day. They are wonderfully cleverly made and each beach is so defended that one can only marvel at the result.

May 2. Our losses have been tremendous, as indeed they were bound to be from the very nature of the attack, but not greater than was expected by the Generals I think. It seems a long way to Constantinople, a way which can only be shortened by the collapse of the Turk, and I must say though I hope for it and don't think it impossible, I do not think it likely until the Fleet gets actually through the Dardanelles, and to do that the Peninsula must be in our hands. . . .

May 5. After some desultory fighting and some night-attacks we are going to begin our big advance to-morrow. We have landed more troops and guns and our men have had some well-earned rest. The Turk is, I think, showing signs of exhaustion and demoralization. This we gather from prisoners and refugees and I sincerely trust it is correct. If it is and we are able to bring off a big thing to-morrow I should hope that the back of our difficulties is broken, I fancy that the Government are hoping for a rising in Constantinople, and I wonder whether their information is correct or not.

I wish I could give you some idea of the sight that meets the eye from the deck of this ship. In front that wonderful inhospitable shore gradually rising to the great peak of Achi Baba, the key of the situation, which it is hoped to capture

to-morrow. On the beach, thousands of men making roads and piers, unloading lighters of their freight of gun-ammunition, stores, etc., the low cliffs crowned by masses of horses, mules, men, tents, hospitals, etc., all rather crowded because they have to keep out of the shell-fire of the enemy. On our right front the entrance to the Dardanelles, with the magnificent Asiatic mountains in the distance. To the right and left battleships and cruisers which occasionally open fire on certain positions pointed out by our aeroplanes with wireless telegraphy. Behind us, masses of transports, ships of all descriptions, from large liners to ordinary colliers and the whole surface of the sea dotted by steamboats of all descriptions towing laden lighters to the beach and empty ones back. One has only to land and walk for a few minutes and one finds oneself in a position from which you can make out the enemy's lines and our own. From here one has a gorgeous view over a plain which gradually rises and ends in the aforesaid Achi Baba, I have to-day been busy writing reports and letters and recommending four fine fellows for the V.C. It has been a great pleasure doing so, but very difficult to find suitable language without being gushing.

I look back at the last ten days and wonder how on earth we have got through this work with so little assistance from Headquarters. We are handling nearly twice the number that they ever have at one time at Southampton with no proper transport officers. We have landed an army of nearly 100,000 men with only the resources of the Fleet, and all the time the ships have been actively engaged in supporting that army. It has truly been a very wonderful piece of work and the greatest praise is due to the officers and men for the magnificent way they have fought and worked. We have gone through an experience which I should think no one will ever have again, and if we are eventually successful, it will not be due to any help or encouragement that we have received from the Admiralty. The Navy and Army have worked well together and there hasn't been the slightest friction, and this I think is very wonderful considering the absolutely different point of view from which each Service looks upon things in general. The transporting of the wounded from the fighting-line to the hospital ships has not been an easy matter. And those wounded! Truly they are

heroes—never a word of complaint whatever their discomfort or pain. I am indeed proud of my countrymen.

May 7. The advance continues, but slowly. The difficulties are very great and have, I am afraid, been much underestimated at home. The soldiers are wonderfully optimistic, and personally I have little doubt but that we shall win through in the end, but it will cost us more than they expected. I believe that the authorities at home thought that when once we were landed the business was over. We have been having a fresh breeze for the last two days, which doesn't facilitate the disembarkation. The work has been and is still very hard. However, everybody works with a will and consequently the difficulties are reduced to a minimum. I doubt if anybody can have an idea of the amount of organization and arrangement required, not only for keeping up the supplies of the Army, but for the Fleet as well.

May 11. . . . We are very much cut off here from news, and only scraps of intelligence (and that lately none too good, alas) of the war filter through. But I find that with the whole of one's thoughts and ideas taken up with our doings here there is no time or even inclination to think of anything else, and one is almost apt to think that this is the only place where fighting is going on. As a matter of fact there has been a cessation of it for the last three days. I fear that the Army is stuck. They have done magnificently, but they haven't got enough men. Always the same old story. And of course the losses in the first four days were enormous. The enemy are probably much in the same case as we are, because they have shown no signs of counter-attacking. The ships go on bombarding forts and guns with a good deal of success on the whole, but the enemy's guns are most cleverly concealed. The landing is practically over. All the troops and artillery are on shore, and we have put them there without a hitch, thank God. On looking back on the whole business the more amazed am I at the initial success, and I cannot help feeling proud at the manner in which the Navy have done their work. I believe now that when I began the task I thought it impossible, but I wouldn't let myself think like that: it *could* be done. And sure enough it was, and it was only when I realized that we had gained the cliffs and that we had planted ourselves on the shore that

I knew how really I had doubted of success. How splendidly everybody worked! Little details which in a peace-mancœuvre one might well have expected to have been slurred by carelessness on the part of some Petty Officer or man, were carried out to perfection, showing that the very meanest must have done his job thoroughly.

We towed more than 90 boats by night from Tenedos to the Dardanelles and put nearly 3,000 men into them all in the dark, and nothing was missing or wrong. When one comes to analyse what that means, one cannot but help feeling proud and thankful. And so small a mistake might have spelt failure! To see those boats going in towards the beach, which we knew was so strongly fortified, like a sort of parade as the day broke, is a sight I shall never forget. Try to imagine my feelings as I was standing on the bridge of the *Euryalus* watching them, knowing so far as I was concerned I could do nothing more to help them except to open fire on an unseen enemy in well-concealed trenches, which one did with a will. Imagine the positive sickness that came over one when one saw the leading men jump out of the boats only to be shot down as they got mixed up in the barbed-wire entanglements, a feeling of sickness which changed gradually to exulting pride as it dawned upon one that *nothing* was going to stop them and that the enemy were giving way. The seamen were just as magnificent. One saw wounded men helping to pull the boats back to get more men, and never hesitating for an instant—these men without means of firing back on the enemy, only oars in their hands. I am not sure I do not think that theirs was the greatest courage if there could be any differentiating. By two o'clock in the afternoon we had landed 13,000 men an hour quicker than we had anticipated. Since then we have been perpetually pouring on shore men, guns, ammunition, stores and provisions—but apparently not enough. It's all finished and we want more men. At one place we ran an old collier ashore with 2,000 men. She had been especially prepared for the job and was magnificently handled by a Commander called Unwin who has since earned the V.C. many times over. He and two midshipmen and two seamen performed perfect prodigies of heroism and valour, both in working at some lighters which had got out of position under a

murderous fire and at saving wounded men. These men seemed to bear charmed lives, for though all around were being shot down, they escaped with a few grazes from bullets which didn't do them any damage—one seaman was eventually killed, but the others are all well and at their work. This all happened on Sunday 25th, and for the next three days our troops were incessantly fighting and never got any sleep at all, and pure exhaustion brought the first phase to an end. Since then we have advanced slowly and gradually, but the ridge we want to get is still in the hands of the enemy. We made a great dash for it four days ago, but it was too well defended by artillery and in spite of a very fine effort on our part, we were brought to a standstill. And there we are, safely dug in, but unable at present to advance. If I have repeated myself at all, you must forgive me, but I have so much thinking to get through that I don't remember very clearly what I have written in preceding letters. But the Admiralty!! We have been actually handling as many transports and troops as are at any time at Southampton. There they have a properly organized staff of a hundred naval and military officers and their attendant clerks, etc., to cope with the work. Here everything is being done by the officers of the Fleet! And how well our fellows have worked; practically they have been at it night and day for fourteen days. All this added on to fighting the ships against the forts and supporting our army, etc. I have always said and shall always continue to say that the Admiralty are much too well served. In the meantime I must tell you another landing was taking place further up the coast. This was effected by the Australians and I believe extremely well done, but I don't know any of the details. Probably you do at this moment! I really think that the Admiralty cannot have been aware of the magnitude of the question—but what criminal ignorance. And goodness knows it is not for want of telling, Oh, how sick I am of all those put in authority over us. If they had one hundredth part of the virtue of any of those splendid men who took the beach on the 25th they would never treat us in the way they do.

Little is known, I fancy, of the enemy, except that his losses have been enormous and that he is exhausted as we are. At first one heard of a few cases of atrocity, but lately

none, and certainly he fights well. In the long run no doubt we shall beat him. But oh, if only the authorities would learn the lessons taught by history! If only they had refrained from attacking the forts until we had an army ready to land, we should have been in Constantinople long ere this and with comparatively few losses. It is nearly three months now since the first bombardment took place.

. . . I really don't see what is to bring an end to it all. This business of the gases is horrible. There are indefinable limits even to the methods of waging war, and to my mind this is one of them. I have tried so hard not to believe the stories one hears and I have tried so hard to put myself into a German skin and look at it from their point of view, but facts are facts and I can never imagine myself, under the greatest stress, authorizing the sinking of unarmed ships or the use of gases.

What distressed him most of all was the condition of the wounded who came pouring back from the fighting-line, for their numbers were far greater than could be dealt with. The hospital ships were full to overflowing and had to be sent to Alexandria to discharge their pitiful cargoes. The men-of-war took on board all they could deal with, and yet there were many who could find no shelter. Boats full of wounded men went from ship to ship seeking accommodation, and though there were empty transports that could take them in they had neither doctors nor nurses. Wemyss was consequently much shocked when on offering the services of as many naval surgeons as could be spared from the Fleet this offer was refused by the Military Medical Authorities on account of the proviso that should necessity arise they were to return immediately to their ships. He went personally to Sir Ian Hamilton to protest, with the result that fourteen naval surgeons were sent to the doctorless ships. These conditions were eventually ameliorated, but the want of hospitals on the Peninsula and the difficulties of the separation of the base from the fighting-line always subsisted, and he heartily cursed those whose lack of foresight had allowed

such an expedition to be undertaken with such inadequate means. Of the Turks he had no complaint to make:

The evacuation of the wounded is a ticklish job, but up to now at any rate the Turks have fought as gentlemen and have never fired on any boats carrying wounded, though there is nothing to stop them doing so except good feeling, because of course those boats cannot come under the Geneva Convention, having many other duties of a military nature to perform.

On May 13th at about 1.30 a.m.

*I had just turned in after a long evening's writing and was half asleep when I became aware of a certain amount of movement and evident excitement on deck. While still in that half-conscious state which exists between properly awake and properly asleep, and consequently not quite sure whether the disturbance was not part of a dream, I was brought to a sudden sense of reality by my orderly opening the door and saying that he believed that a ship had been sunk. In a second I had slipped on a great-coat and was on deck. The officer of the watch told me that something, the nature of which was not quite clear, had happened at the entrance of the Straits, hidden from our sight by Cape Helles, whose outlines was lit up by the rays of search-lights beyond. All available boats from the ships had already been dispatched to the scene, and I could only remain with my glasses fixed on the point, awaiting evidence of what was happening. What had occurred was that the *Goliath*, the guard-ship at the mouth of the Straits, had been attacked by an enemy torpedo-boat. The torpedo got home, and the ship sank in a few minutes, leaving that portion of the crew that did not go down with her struggling in the water. The current, running swiftly out of the Straits, carried them with it, and as they were swept past the Cape, the search-lights ever playing on them to assist the boats in their work of rescue, there appeared to our horrified eyes a vision of men struggling in the water, all the clearer for the surrounding darkness. The night was perfectly still and it was difficult to believe that the fighting-line lay only a few hundred yards

* "The Navy in the Dardanelles," pp. 126-27.

away—and now this stillness was broken by an indistinct noise as of an angry crowd in the distance, a noise which gradually rose and fell and finally subsided, as the men were picked up or drowned—until at last stillness once more reigned and no signs were left of the tragedy that had so suddenly overtaken the *Goliath*—gone to the bottom before she came into our view.

CHAPTER VIII

GALLIPOLI—EVACUATION

May 17. Mudros. Here I am back at Mudros after a truly wonderful three weeks off the Dardanelles. The comparative peace and quiet of this place is very refreshing, for during those three weeks there has scarcely been an hour of the day or night when there has not been a booming of guns. My work in landing the Army over, I have returned here to see about the base again and find that there is much to be done. Requirements are ever increasing, but the ways of meeting these requirements do not augment in proportion.

A week later the advent of enemy submarines was indeed to double and triple his labours. Their two first victims were the *Triumph*, torpedoed on May 25th, and the *Majestic* two days later, after which it was decided that until further anti-submarine protection was available the fleet of transports and supply ships up to now lying unmolested off Helles and Anzac would have to seek shelter in the harbour of Mudros. There, too, men and stores would in future have to be transhipped into small craft for conveyance to the Peninsula, while Sir Ian Hamilton and his Staff till now afloat in the *Arcadian* had to establish themselves at Kephalo. To defend them from submarine attack, to ensure their communications was to prove a further strain on the already slender resources of the base.

May 25. . . . We have just heard for certain that Fisher and Churchill have actually gone. We must now pray that some sympathy and common sense may be brought to bear on our matters out here. . . .

May 30. . . . I see that Jackson relieves Fisher. On the whole I am inclined to think that it is the best possible appointment under the circumstances. . . . Here the situation remains unchanged. I suppose the Admiralty and War Office have at length grasped that it is no little picnic they have undertaken. I already see signs of a tendency to give us more assistance.

The Admiralty was henceforth no longer to be a house divided against itself, for up to now, whilst Winston Churchill was the originator of the Dardanelles expedition, Lord Fisher had done everything he could to baulk it.

My duties are extraordinarily varied—nothing seems to come amiss and the subjects to which I have to give attention would astonish you. Civil administration, naval administration, wounded, secret service, diplomatic relations, naval brigades, prizes, cemeteries, waterworks, building piers—the list seems endless and the work multiplies. It's all rather tiring, and one has always to be at concert pitch to keep the thing going. What one always has to bear in mind is the fact that this Fleet consists of vague ships brought together anyhow and anywhere, that they have never had a chance of being properly and quietly organized as a whole and that consequently they have not got that invaluable asset of having worked together beforehand. And this is what Winston Churchill gave to undertake by far the most difficult operation of the whole war!

June 9. . . . I am pining to hear an account of the Admiralty troubles. Arthur Balfour has during his career shown signs of great moral courage and I believe is an easy man to work with. These are two great assets which should be of immense use to him and remainder of Admiralty. Jackson's ideas are eminently sound and he has a very great knowledge of the profession and they are both straight men. De Robeck and I have quite fallen into the right lines as regards each other, and I don't regret for one minute my action which made him my Senior Officer. I must confess to you that it was a personal sacrifice so far as I was concerned, but I feel quite sure that I did the right thing and that it is now all for the best. . . . The loss of *Triumph* and *Majestic* are two of those incidents of warfare that it is impossible to guard against. Luckily the loss of life was small and a fine discipline prevailed. The Captain of *Triumph* is now my Chief of Staff—a very good fellow and an able officer, by name Fitzmaurice. He is of immense assistance to me, and his advent has eased the strain very considerably.

At that time the *Europa*, the depôt ship, henceforth to be the headquarters of the long-suffering staff so painfully cramped hitherto, had at length arrived and was to prove a great alleviation of the discomforts endured up to now.

Captain Bevan described how every day at 9 a.m. there was a Staff conference where all the Staff assembled and reported progress, differences of opinion and difficulties, and the Admiral listened and gave advice and orders. Many good judgments were made, often in half an hour. The Admiral sometimes attended with profuse apologies, in a dressing-gown, having felt the need of an extra hour in bed—but dressed or undressed, he always came to the conferences and very useful they were.

I am sure that no one ever came to luncheon in the *Europa*, and luncheon guests were numerous, without feeling refreshed when he left, not only physically but mentally. There was a good flow of talk on all the questions of the day; we younger officers were not afraid to speak because we knew that meals were intended to be what they were—pleasant leisure periods.

The mail was always keenly awaited, and although I am sure the Admiral chafed inwardly at being condemned to a life of administration in Mudros, never once did he utter a word of regret at having given up the command at sea to Admiral de Robeck.

He proved himself a brilliant administrator.

Sir Harry Luke, who was with him the whole time, bears eloquent witness as to how, when confronted by an almost impossible situation, that of being appointed in England Governor of an island possessing already three, a military, naval, and civil, Greek Governors and without a legal basis of any sort, either national, statutory, or otherwise, he rose to the occasion.

It was a task which, as Sir Harry writes, required a very special blend of qualities, if it was to be undertaken with success. And for such a task there could have been no

happier selection than R. Wemyss. Not only had he in generous measure the engaging attributes generally associated with the British sailor, geniality, breeziness, the quality of being in the parlance of to-day a "good mixer," but in addition to these he possessed a happy independence of precedents and red-tape (very necessary in a post where there were no precedents and where red-tape would have strangled every endeavour), the capacity equally necessary in Mudros to come to quick decisions, a genuine sense of justice and an equally genuine and in the circumstances equally desirable sense of humour, the rare and important virtue which the Romans termed *aequanimitas* and our age might describe as a refusal to fuss or get fussed, and the ability amounting in his case almost to genius, to get on with foreigners and to see their point of view, to which a captivating personality, with its infectious laugh and disarming smile, made a contribution not to be underestimated.

All these qualities added to his conception of making Lemnos safe for the Allies, while at the same time leaving the local authorities to manage their own affairs, enabled him to enforce the necessary restrictions without undue friction, while causing his administration, far from being distasteful to the islanders, to inspire them with confidence and friendliness and to remain on the best of terms with the Greek authorities.

The same reasons (Sir Harry Luke adds) contributed to make his relations with the French, who apart from the presence of their ships in harbour had often considerable numbers of troops on shore, as perfect as they were. On one occasion a newly arrived British subaltern unfamiliar with local conditions, under a misapprehension, refused the General commanding the French base at Mudros admittance to the fort at Kastro. A trivial incident which might have given rise to acrimony, had not Wemyss and the French General been actuated by the same feelings of inter-allied solidarity. That the only result of the episode should have been that the subaltern dined that night with General Bauman and enjoyed what was probably his best meal of

the campaign, was a tribute alike to the sportsmanship of the Frenchman and to the happy international atmosphere in the island which Wemyss did so much to create and maintain.

The month of June dragged wearily along: the fighting continued without much visible results; shortage of shells, shortage of men prevented the Allies from pressing home the advantages which they from time to time gained. General Gouraud, one of France's most brilliant military leaders who had succeeded General d'Amade, had been severely wounded by the explosion of a shell and had to leave. The weather became very hot, which perhaps helps the work to go slower and gives me much trouble to make other people keep their tempers—not that they lose them really, but heat always magnifies mole-hill troubles into mountainous difficulties.

One of his chief cares were the bluejackets:

I am trying to set up a canteen on the lines of an open-air club. They *must* get rest and recreation. They have a very hard and trying time of it on board their ships.

To his former Secretary, Paymaster Manisty, now working at the Admiralty, he thus described his activities (July 17th 1915):

Well, it's a wonderful show out here, and just about as different to Cruiser force 9 as can well be imagined, and it would be hard to tell you what my duties are—the easier way would be to say what they are not, because then I really believe that the cypher 0 would describe it. I am Governor of Mudros, and as such have a good deal to do with the military forces—I am a sort of glorified Dockyard Admiral (without a dockyard at my back be it understood)—I sometimes command a cruiser squadron and always have more small craft to look after than I should like to enumerate. French Generals, Greek scavengers, naval officers and amateur Sherlock Holmes I have to deal with every day. Ships and boats and the Water Question and Harbour

Defences are some of the other necessary subjects I have to deal with, and last, but not least, comes the very knotty question of punishment of mercantile marine scoundrels over whom I have no legal authority at all. Poor Miller shakes his head and tries to keep me in the orthodox ways of the Law, but I tell him this is no time for quibbles of that sort, and so get my way as he is not a barrister! I suppose that had it been you instead of him you would by now have frightened me out of my evil courses by holding over my head the possibilities I was laying myself out for. But the truly awful part of it is the shortage of officers and men under which we labour. Everything scamped down; an enormous amount of extra work and shortage all round. It's an absolute fact that many officers are on the list from pure over-work (Flags I am sorry to say one of them), and you know that naval officers don't give in quickly. I don't think the Admiralty realize the state of affairs—and they actually ask us to send men home! You would laugh to see my fleet of small craft. Tugs and steamers of all sorts and kinds manned by the weirdest collection of beings. You should see my Examination Service Vessel. She can just steam $4\frac{1}{2}$ knots and has to take down the examination flag in the bows if there is a hard wind. It runs all right somehow, but the strain is great and I am always afraid there may be a breakdown somewhere in consequence. I hoisted my flag in the old *Euryalus* for a month, during the landing and subsequent operations. You will have read all about that in the papers, so I won't bother you with any account. It was nice to be on board that ship again and to have old friends around one when one was doing a job. The position out here is curious and interesting, and I often wonder to what extent we are easing the pressure elsewhere. It is curious how local and parochial one is apt to get. One has to shake oneself to remember that there is fighting going on in other parts of the world. Five battleships we have lost out here—a big price to pay—fortunately the loss of life was comparatively small—except in the case of the *Goliath*. The poor old *Majestic*! The average age of her ship's company was 38! And one seaman there had his *grandfather*—as another member of the ship's company. A *fact*! This harbour is a wonderful sight—battleships, cruisers, transports, supply ships, colliers, tugs, small craft,

local craft that I have hired, etc., and communication is not easy. Until about a fortnight ago I only had the *Hussar*, and how on earth we managed I cannot think—I have 14 people on my Staff one way and another and there are five different offices. I have many faults, but making work is not one of them, and so you can imagine the amount that goes on.

Sir Ian Hamilton's representations as to the urgent necessity for reinforcements had at last borne fruit, and the Government decided to send out three more divisions, while the Admiralty—where

“a great change has come about since the advent of Balfour and Jackson. The sympathy non-existent before and so essential a factor of success seems to be returning”—

was in no ways behindhand in sending out old cruisers and new monitors, and motor-lighters especially built for carrying troops and horses.

Our submarines, which out here have done splendidly. Those officers handle their boats magnificently, and had our torpedoes at the commencement of the war been as good as they should have been, there would have been a very different story to tell,

were doing wonders in the Sea of Marmora, where the Turks were having a bad time:

Their losses too have been far greater than ours and one shudders when one thinks of the fate of their wounded. It is a beastly war, but out here it is being waged in a much more respectable manner than anywhere else.

The preparations of the coming offensive were being actively pushed, and both War Office and Admiralty were helping to the utmost of their power.

July 23. . . . Generals seem to spring up like mushrooms in the night, and each one's Staff seems to be more glittering than the last; I *hope* their usefulness is in like proportion. . . . I gather that the English public are somewhat depressed,



REAR-ADMIRAL R. E. WEMYSS IN THE DARDANELLES, 1915

not that there is anything to be depressed about, only they have been lured on by false insinuations to hope for great things that cannot come off. The people latest out from England are raging against Northcliffe and Lloyd George, who, they tell me, are bound up together. . . .

The attack started on August 6th.

Aug. 12. All this last week we have been landing more armies and alas! embarking more wounded. The fighting has been very severe and the losses are great and as yet no conclusion has been come to. It is an awful country, high scrub, and I fear that many of our wounded will have been taken prisoner. This time I have remained in Mudros. . . .

Not only in Mudros but in bed, for though he would not confess it to his wife, he was laid up at the time by a severe attack of dysentery aggravated by the heat. She was in Switzerland, whither she had gone with her child in July, lured on by the hope of joining him, when, as was firmly believed, they would push on to Constantinople.

How I wish to God I could join you there; I long for a breath of delicious Swiss air (he had written when at times "sick of the sight of the arid hills of this place [Mudros], not that I have much time for contemplating them.")

I wish you could have some small idea of how awful life is out here. We, the Navy, don't even get any excitement. We labour for ever and continuously for the Army. Of course they couldn't do without us, but they are not easy people to deal with. . . . If this coup which we are playing now does not come off, I have no idea what their future plans may be. All our people have done so well right from top to bottom. The young officers I have the greatest admiration for, and certainly the Osborne-trained cadet has done credit to the place.

Aug. 15. Still this very heavy and very inconclusive fighting goes on. . . . The Brasseys have been here in the *Sunbeam* to take away wounded. They came off and had tea with me, and oh how delighted I was to see them—not that they had any news of interest. . . . What a fearful mess of everything

do our diplomatists make. I cannot believe but that good diplomacy would have brought all the Balkan States in on our side long before this, but, after all, if they see the enormous price given to Italy, I suppose it makes them open their mouths wider and wider. I feel quite sure that if the original landing had taken place at Enos instead of on the Gallipoli Peninsula, we might have had Bulgaria fighting on our side now. . . . The Turks here fight splendidly and one regrets the fatuous policy which allowed them to join the Germans. I hope so much that the end will be that the Turks remain in Constantinople, with the Bosphorus and Dardanelles internationalized. The more I think of it, the more I believe that to be the only satisfactory solution of that question.

Aug. 19. . . . The position of affairs I cannot consider satisfactory. We seem to be hung up more than we should be. . . . I am really proud of our Service when I compare it with the Army. Talk of the Navy being narrow—it is *miles* broad compared to the Army. The regimental officer and the private are magnificent, but the Generals and the Staff!!!! Their ignorance and their self-satisfaction is something awful. I could declaim for hours on the subject. I have just heard that my five heroes of April 25th have all got their V.C.s, which pleases me immensely. Late enough in all conscience but better late than never.

Aug. 23. Alas, we have to put up with much disappointment. A few days ago we were all hoping for great things, but they haven't come off, though I am of opinion that they ought to have. . . . I am going to Athens for a couple of days to see the Minister and talk over one or two matters that require clearing up—the question of contraband, always a difficult one, is doubly so out here where nationalities and provinces all seem to be a glorious hotch-potch. . . .

The doctors had insisted on change of air after his recent illness, and he therefore joyfully embarked on one of the small cruisers, for three days' jaunt to Athens, which did him all the good in the world.

No sooner had he left Mudros behind than he began to feel better.

The night was glorious and we sat on deck under a beautiful full moon and felt that everything was beautiful except mankind who was devastating the world with this damnable war. To wake in the morning and *not* to see the eternal tents of the hospitals and to see the beautiful Acropolis instead was in itself almost enough to have justified my journey.

He was taken for a motor drive.

The pleasure of being once more in a motor-car with nothing to remind me of Lemnos and the war. The scenery is beautiful and the air delicious and I just leant back and thought of nothing.

He dined and slept at the villa of the British Minister, Sir F. Elliot; he drank champagne which he had not tasted for months and months and

“felt as if I were out on a real spree.”

In the hotel he ran across Valentine Chirol (former *Times* correspondent at Berlin),

upon whose neck I naturally fell and with whom I had much conversation and interchange of views. Alas! I did not come away reassured. The summing of what he told me can only be described by the word Chaos. The mess the Government has made of things; supine when they should have been active and meddlesome when they should have been quiet. I gather that at home all is done in watertight compartments, and that no Minister has the slightest idea of what his neighbour and colleague is doing. Orders sent out from one Office unknown by another which it indirectly affects through its subordinates, till this sort of muddle has, I fancy, got matters into such an unravellable mess that nobody knows where they are. He, Chirol, is on a special mission sent out by the Foreign Office and he tells me they simply ignore him and refuse to answer his telegrams asking for information and instructions! He thinks it is almost impossible to bring in the Balkan States now, though three months ago it could have been done, and now it will be as much as we can do to keep them neutral.

He returned to Mudros all the better for

change of air, change of scenery and change of persons. A few hours of comparative civilization have all helped to make another man of me and I have come back fresher and more cheerful than I have for some time;

according to his Staff,

like a giant refreshed, full of news of the outside world, having met twice as many people as anyone else could have seen in the time, and full of gossip, both interesting and amusing.

His visit to Athens not only proved beneficial to his health but also politically. It had enabled him to clear up most of the troubles and difficulties which had hitherto beset him, and on his return he found the Greek officials at Kastro, the capital of the Island, more than ready to meet him half-way.

I am quite pleased with myself for the manner in which I have handled everything to do with the Island, for I need hardly tell you that the Government have shirked all responsibility and have been of no assistance whatever.

He was now in as great accord with the Greek authorities as he was with his English and French colleagues. General Altham, who had assumed command of the military position of the base, he found very easy to work with, as likewise he did the new French Admiral, "a charming man of the name of de Bon." His friendship with the latter was to prove a lasting one and helped them both to work in close and fruitful co-operation, when respectively First Sea Lord and Chief of the French Naval Staff, they were to be so closely connected during the last eleven months of the war and throughout the Paris Peace Negotiations.

For the Admiral commanding the French Squadron, Rear-Admiral Guépratte, from the outset a cordial and enthusiastic collaborator, he felt both admiration and affection; he appreciated his gallantry, his dash.

A dear old fellow (as he wrote to his wife) whom we all like immensely.

At a farewell luncheon, given in honour of his promotion, he embraced me on both cheeks in front of all the officers of the ship and the guard who were drawn up to do me honour. However, that sort of thing has no longer any terrors for me, so that I was able to return his embrace without any signs of confusion! I also did rather well in an impromptu speech I was in no ways prepared for, because the *déjeuner* was not big and it never entered my head that there would be any speechifying.

An old Paris friend who, much to his satisfaction, turned up at this time was the Vicomte d'Harcourt, Vice-President of the French Red Cross, who arrived with the French Hospital ship the *Charles Roux*.

I have seen d'Harcourt more than once. I have shown him all over our hospital arrangements and he has shown me all over the *Charles Roux*. All the very latest inventions in surgery and such nice women as nurses. Two of them came to tea with me the other day. They are so exactly what they should be—such ladies and so calm and collected and so business-like. They are so universally lightly grey haired that I am almost inclined to think that they use powder! I can't tell you how much I admire the general mien of the French. They are so unboastful, full of courage and determination. I often wonder what will happen in France. It is impossible to believe that the people will calmly allow these corrupt governments to continue as heretofore—but what is there to follow? Certainly not a Kingdom and I should think equally certainly not an Empire. I suppose all countries will have social revolutions more or less acute.

The recent unsuccessful attacks, the Suvla Bay battle, due in great measure to faulty generalship, proved the last attempt of the Army to push through. The casualties had been appalling, over 45,000, and it was in vain that Sir Ian Hamilton

continued to press for further reinforcements. The Government had neither the means nor the inclination to send them, all the more as their new commitments at Salonica represented a further drain on their resources.

The question now arose what would happen next, and in London the abandonment of the whole enterprise against the Dardanelles was beginning to be considered.

Sir Ian Hamilton was known to have declared the evacuation "unthinkable," voicing hereby the opinion of every responsible soldier and sailor on the spot, but his recall on October 14th and the change of command might well forebode a change of policy, all the more as his successor, Sir Charles Monro, who had lately commanded an army in France, was more likely than not to be imbued with the Western school of thought, which looked upon the Dardanelles campaign as a "side show."

Ever since the August reverses, Wemyss had been convinced that an attempt ought to be made by the Fleet to force the Straits and enter into the Sea of Marmora. This opinion, he knew, had long been held by Commodore Keyes, Admiral de Robeck's Chief of Staff, who had even had a detailed plan prepared to this effect. When, therefore, the latter came to him at the end of October to tell him he was proceeding to England to lay this plan before the Admiralty and War Council and asked him whether he could do so, stating it had his approval, he hastened to give his consent, all the more as it coincided completely with his own views. At the same time he could not help admiring Admiral de Robeck's broad-mindedness in allowing his Chief of Staff to go to London to put forward a scheme he himself disapproved.

A visit Wemyss paid to Salonika about this time, and from where he returned with very unfavourable impressions, confirmed his opinion that failure in the Dardanelles would be fraught with disastrous results, for if our late reverses had

caused Bulgaria to throw in her lot with the Central Powers what might not be the consequences of withdrawal?

Military victory seemed now impossible without considerable reinforcements apparently not available—there therefore only remained the Fleet.

A repetition of the March attack on the Dardanelles forts was not likely to be more successful now than then, but to rush a squadron through the Straits seemed a feasible proposition. True, this plan had been rejected at the outset, but circumstances were now completely changed. With our Army firmly entrenched on the Peninsula, our submarines denuding the Marmora of all traffic, a squadron above the Narrows would be in a position to cut off all supplies and sever the communications of the Turkish Army, which would thus be at our mercy.

That such a rush would entail heavy casualties was undoubted, but, as Zeebrugge was later to show, boldness and surprise constitute strong weapons in the hands of attackers, and in no case would the losses attain those which according to H.Q.S.'s own computations were involved in evacuation. A successful attack would spell victory—withdrawal could only mean defeat. Wemyss' whole hopes therefore centred on the outcome of Keyes' journey to London and his powers of persuasion.

His own position was a difficult and delicate one; operations were not within the sphere of his duty, and serving under an Admiral who, temporarily his senior, was in fact his junior officer, made him doubly chary of offering an opinion, all the more as it was not asked for.

The new C.-in-C. arrived on October 27th, during a howling gale of wind which alone must have prejudiced him against the campaign, and lost no time in coming to a decision. Three days later he was already reporting unfavourably on the situation and advising immediate evacuation, a point of view shared by his Generals.

Lord Kitchener was torn by conflicting feelings: he was fearful of the effects of withdrawal on Egypt; he had interviewed Keyes and now this telegram from Sir Charles Monro added to his perplexity. He resolved to come out and see for himself. In a telegram of November 3rd announcing his arrival to General Birdwood he said:

. . . I have seen Captain Keyes and I believe the Admiralty will agree to making a naval attempt to force the passage of the Straits. We must do what we can to assist them, and I think as soon as our ships are in the Sea of Marmora we should seize the Bulair Isthmus and hold it so as to supply the Navy if the Turks still hold out. . . . There will probably be a change of command, Wemyss being appointed in command to carry through the naval part of the work. . . . I absolutely refuse to sign orders for evacuation, which I think would be the gravest disaster and would condemn a large percentage of our men to death or imprisonment.

But on the following day another telegram to the same revealed his hesitancy:

I am coming as arranged . . . the more I look at the problem the less I see my way through; so you had better work out very quietly and secretly any scheme for getting the troops off the Peninsula.

Lord Kitchener arrived at Mudros on November 9th, accompanied by Sir H. McMahon, the High Commissioner, and Sir John Maxwell, the General commanding in Egypt, and there ensued a fortnight of inspections of troops and positions and conferences; Lord Kitchener's contribution, always with an eye on Egypt, consisting in the proposal of a third scheme—that of landing troops at Ayas Bay close to Alexandretta, to cut the Turkish lines of communication; this, however, met with universal disapproval and was vetoed from London.

The final result was that Lord Kitchener telegraphed home that Suvla and Anzac should be immediately evacuated while Helles was retained.

His departure on November 23rd coincided with Commodore Keyes' return, full of hope: he had laid his plan before the War Council and Admiralty, who both, so he was convinced, had viewed it with favour—so had Admiral Lacaze, the French Minister of Marine, who had even promised six old battleships—so even apparently had Lord Kitchenier, whom he had seen on his arrival at Mudros. When, therefore, two days later Admiral de Robeck announced he was going home on leave, both Wemyss and Keyes looked upon this as favourable to their hopes, for it was evident that it was not he who would be called upon to force the Straits.

The command now devolved upon Wemyss, who, hoisting his flag in the *Lord Nelson*, lost no time by straining every nerve to try and turn even yet at the eleventh hour defeat into victory.

His greatest characteristic, the one most admired by his Staff, indeed by all those who served with or under him, was that he loved, what most men fear, responsibility. This was due first and foremost to high moral courage and secondly to his power of command derived from a long line of ancestors who had all wielded authority. According to his Flag Lieutenant he

liked to say if ever one protested mildly that something should be passed through his Chief of the Staff before a decision was final, that, though he fully appreciated staff procedure, one maxim was all important, "The King can do no wrong," i.e. the Commander-in-Chief was at liberty to consult anyone at any time.

He had, in the belief that it was for the country's good, spontaneously offered to serve under de Robeck, though the latter was his junior on the list, and no man could have done so thereafter with greater loyalty or truer good-humour.

But now that he found himself Commander-in-Chief he did not hesitate to act according to his own convictions.

With the able and enthusiastic collaboration of Commodore Keyes, who had remained his Chief of Staff, and the valuable assistance of Captain Godfrey, R.M.A., he urged upon the Admiralty the advisability of an immediate naval attack, and in his first telegram of appreciation of November 28th explained

that the operation in view would be undertaken for the purpose of opening the Straits and *keeping them open*. To effect this a squadron of eight battleships, four light cruisers and ten destroyers with four more older battleships to act as supply vessels and merchantmen carrying coal and ammunition, all fitted with mine bumpers, would enter the Straits at dark, at such a time as to arrive above the Narrows at earliest dawn. Under cover of darkness and veiled from the search-lights on Kephez Point by a smoke-screen, they would rush through the mine-fields past the forts, and the first act of the survivors would be the destruction of all depôts on the beach and of the small craft capable of laying mines, after which they would attack the forts taking them in reverse. A second squadron of six more modern battleships, the *Lord Nelson*, the *Agamemnon*, two *King Edwards*, the *Glory* and *Canopus*, with destroyers, sweeping ahead of them, would attack the forts from below the mine-fields as soon as it was sufficiently light; whilst the third squadron consisting of the *Swiftsure*, two monitors and five cruisers would cover the Army and join in the attack on the forts from across the Peninsula. The co-operation of the Army was required to contain the Turkish forces and prevent them from turning their mobile artillery on to the ships and mine-sweepers; and herein lay the advantage we had gained from the occupation of our present positions. I believe (so he added) that such a sudden attack, especially if, as hoped, the enemy were taken by surprise, must have a demoralizing effect on the Turkish Army and on the population of Constantinople.

At the same time he sought out Sir Charles Monro and, placing his project before him, endeavoured to convert him to his views. But in vain. The C.-in-C. was a Westerner in

the full acceptance of that term. His only interest lay in the Western front; what happened elsewhere was to him a matter of comparative indifference. Wemyss soon discovered that he had in him an opponent who, obstinately bent on evacuation, would never waver in his opposition to the scheme, which, should it be sanctioned, would be so against his advice.

Meanwhile fresh difficulties were to arise. On November 26th a violent gale had sprung up, lasting for three days accompanied by torrential rain which played havoc with all communications, breaking up piers and breakwaters and wrecking boats, lighters, and barges. It was followed by a blizzard causing intense suffering to the troops; 10,000 casualties had to be evacuated from the fighting-lines, while there were more than 200 deaths amongst the men frozen in the trenches. When Wemyss entered Kephala Harbour on November 30th, it was to behold a scene of desolation—the waters strewn with wreckage, the beach one huge scrap-heap of steamers, lighters, barges heaped upon one another in inextricable confusion. He had gone there to confer with the Generals, whom he had found, however, as adverse as the C.-in-C. to his ideas, the least hostile being General Birdwood, who was more alive to political results.

But in spite of military opposition and the fury of the elements, Wemyss and his Staff clung to their scheme with unvarying tenacity.

On December 2nd he had been appointed Acting Vice-Admiral. This raised their hopes, as did an urgent telegram from the Admiralty inquiring the time it would take to re-embark two Divisions already landed at Salonika and send them to Mudros. On December 5th orders were received to suspend all disembarkations at Salonika, an indication the Government were contemplating sending reinforcements for joint action in Gallipoli. Greatly encouraged, Wemyss now forwarded a personal telegram to Mr. Balfour (First Lord), again enumerating all the arguments for a naval attack,

while pointing out how much its chances had improved within the last few days. For ever since our submarine campaign in the Marmora had practically put an end to Turkish sea communications, the enemy's supplies had had to reach him by rail over a bridge which Wemyss had caused to be destroyed on December 2nd by gun-fire from the *Agamemnon* and a monitor, while, according to reliable information, losses, disease, want of ammunition and supplies were greatly demoralizing the Turkish Army, whose morale had further been severely shaken by the late blizzard. Wemyss was now confident of success; victory appeared assured, when on December 8th a personal telegram from the Admiralty dashed all his hopes to the ground:

In face of unanimous military opinion H.M. Government have decided to shorten front by evacuating Anzac and Suvla.

Yet even now Wemyss and his Chief of the Staff were unwilling to yield, and the former dispatched the following telegram to the First Lord:

The reason given for this decision is a very great surprise to me and one which I feel convinced has been arrived at under a misapprehension by the military at home: I have never seen any of the General Officer C.-in-C.'s telegrams or appreciations, though I have shown him all of mine. I strongly confirm all I said in my telegram of November 28th *re* evacuation. The Navy is prepared to force the Straits and control them for an indefinite period, cutting off all Turkish supplies which now find their way to the Peninsula either by sea from the Marmora or across the Dardanelles from the Asiatic to the European shore. The only line of communication left would be the roads along the Isthmus of Bulair, which can be controlled almost entirely from the Sea of Marmora and the Gulf of Xeros.

What is offered the Army therefore is the practical complete severance of all Turkish lines of communication, accompanied by the destruction of the large supply depôts on the shores of the Dardanelles. In the first instance I strongly advocated that the naval attack should synchronize with an

army offensive, but this is not a necessity, and if the Army will be prepared to attack in the event of a favourable opportunity presenting itself, nothing more need be required of them.

The Navy here is prepared to undertake this operation with every assurance of success.

The unanimous military opinion referred to in Admiralty telegram 422 has, I feel certain, been greatly influenced, and naturally so, by the military appreciations of Sir Charles Monro. These I have not seen, but their purport I have gathered in course of conversations. The Corps Commanders I know view the evacuation with the greatest misgiving. The forcing of the Dardanelles as outlined in my telegrams has never been put before them, and I am convinced that after considering the certain results which would follow a naval success, they would favour an attack, especially in view of the undoubted low morale of the Turkish Army on the Peninsula, of which we have ample evidence.

A few days ago General Monro remarked to me: If you succeed and occupy Gallipoli and even Constantinople what then? It would not help us in France or Flanders? I mention this to show that he has quite failed to realize the significance of the real German offensive in the Near East. He is obsessed with the idea that the only method by which the Allies will be victorious is in killing or capturing such a number of Germans that they will be unable to continue fighting. He looks upon any action which does not have the above as its immediate objective as a waste of effort.

The very extensive German propaganda being pursued all over the Near East, accompanied by the expenditure of vast sums of money, is not, I feel convinced, being undertaken as a side-issue of the European War.

A position of stalemate on both fronts of the principal theatres of war appears the natural outcome of the present situation. This opinion is freely expressed in higher military circles in Greece and would therefore appear to be fostered by the Germans—a significant point.

By surrendering our position here, when within sight of victory, we are aiding the enemy to obtain markets the possession of which may enable her to outlast the Allies in the war of exhaustion now commencing.

A successful attack would once for all dispel these clouds of doubt, a large amount of shipping would be released and the questions of Greece and Egypt settled.

I do not know what has been decided about Constantinople, but if the Turk could be told that we were in the Marmora to prevent its occupation by the Germans, such a course would inevitably lead to disruption and therefore weakness among them.

I fear the effect (of evacuation) on the Navy would be bad. Although no word of attack has passed my lips except to my immediate Staff and Admirals, I feel sure that every officer and man would feel that the campaign had been abandoned without sufficient use having been made of our greatest force, viz. the Navy.

The position is so critical that there is no time for standing on ceremony, and I suggest that General Birdwood, the officer who would have to carry out the attack or evacuation which is now ordered, be asked for his appreciation.

The logical conclusion therefore is the choice of evacuation or forcing the Straits. I consider the former disastrous, tactically and strategically, and the latter feasible and, so long as troops remain at Anzac, decisive.

I am convinced that the time is ripe for a vigorous offensive and I am confident of success.

But it was in vain that Wemyss sought to imbue the authorities trembling at Whitehall with his own gallant and courageous spirit. The Government, "steadfast in pusillanimous resolve," * reiterated their orders for evacuation of Suvla and Anzac. Mr. Balfour, in a personal telegram, viewed this decision "with deepest regret," while in their official telegram the Admiralty announced that

they were not prepared to authorize the Navy single-handed attempting to force the Narrows and acting in the Sea of Marmora cut off from supplies; in view of individual and combined appreciation of responsible Generals and the great strain thrown on naval and military resources by the operations in Greece, the Government's decision to evacuate Suvla and Anzac would not be further questioned by them—a

* "The World Crisis," by Winston Churchill, Vol. II, p. 502.

decision received by Wemyss on December 12th with the greatest regret and misgiving.

But he was yet to make one more desperate effort to shape the course of events and to avert defeat.

The Admiralty, in announcing their intention of evacuating Suvla and Anzac, had added they "would hold Cape Helles to enable another attack to be made later," a proposition that Wemyss full well knew was an impossibility, for the abandonment of one position must necessarily entail the abandonment of both. He therefore on December 13th addressed the following telegram to the Admiralty:

On completion of evacuation of Suvla and Anzac a most serious situation will present itself at Helles.

The whole of the Helles zone is exposed to artillery fire from the Asiatic shore and from the North of Achi Baba. The intensity of this fire is likely to be more than doubled on account of the number of guns released from the Northern zone, and the influx of ammunition and heavy howitzers from Germany may cause it to become so severe as to force the Army to evacuate.

The Helles position, even with the addition of heavy artillery, will be untenable unless the Army is in possession of Achi Baba. The capture of this position appears to me essential if we are to retain our footing on the Peninsula.

I consider the decision must be made at once and acted on without loss of time and, if possible, before the Turks can move their artillery from Anzac and Suvla.

A policy of holding on to our present positions at Helles and waiting until spring for offensive action will be suicidal for the Army. Better to evacuate that position immediately than to suffer a second and more decisive reverse by procrastinating.

The capture of the Achi Baba position does not seem beyond our powers. The G.O.C. 8 Corps attributes the capture of trenches on November 15th with insignificant loss to a great extent to the support afforded by a naval Squadron consisting of one specially protected cruiser who, after careful registration used indirect fire, without the assistance of spotting by aeroplanes rendered impossible by high wind.

Fifteen miles of heavy net is available here; with this it will be possible to guard an area off the left flank, where battleships will be able to lie and support the Army in a sustained attack.

Once Achi Baba is in our hands, we shall be in the position desired last April and the attack on the Narrows can be continued with every hope of success.

I strongly hold that this is not a purely military matter, but one of combined naval and military importance, and I therefore have no hesitation in putting forth my views and consider it my duty to do so as the Admiral commanding at this critical moment.

But Sir Charles Monro was no believer in naval and military co-operation. He had forbidden General Birdwood and the Corps Commanders to confer with Wemyss without his permission; on December 14th he telegraphed home taking exception to his views, or indeed any expressions of military matters on his part. Obligated to admit, however, that Helles could not be held without Achi Baba, he pressed for complete evacuation, and the Government, bent on retreat, was only too willing to listen to his advice.

There was nothing more to be done.

Wemyss' whole energy had now to be concentrated on evacuation, an eventuality which had for long filled him with dread and apprehension. The H.Q.S. had computed possible losses at 30,000, but he full well knew that should a gale spring up these might be limitless. From beaches under fire some 90,000 men with 200 guns had to be re-embarked under the very eyes of the enemy, an operation so great and under conditions so difficult as must ever be regarded a feat unparalleled in the annals of war.

Admiral Burmester relates how when *Euryalus*, who had been at Mitylene on a petrol blockade, was summoned to Mudros he saw Wemyss, now C.-in-C., on board the *Lord Nelson*, who:

gave me the news of which indeed I had heard rumours but refused to credit, that evacuation of Suvla and Anzac

was ordered and that he was to take naval charge of the operations. I naturally asked if it was not feared that grave risks and heavy losses were inevitable, and even bluntly, if he were not dismayed and depressed by the heavy responsibility cast upon him. To my great admiration he said certainly not, so far as he was personally concerned. He strongly disagreed with the policy of evacuation, but since he had fully and clearly indicated this to higher authority without effecting a change in their decisions he should carry on the operation to the utmost of his ability and without regard to any consequences in which he might be personally involved. This attitude, calm, unharassed and optimistic as ever, made a great impression on me, and I was of course delighted he had called *Euryalus* to take part in the work involved.

"Calm, unharassed, optimistic" he was to remain to the end. On the afternoon of the penultimate day, i.e. the most critical moment of the evacuation, a drifter reported by wireless having seen a submarine off Suvla Bay. His Flag Lieutenant

showed the report to the Admiral when we returned from a walk ashore at Imbros where the flagship was berthed. I asked if I should warn all ships that a submarine had been seen in the vicinity, but he said, "No, don't do that; it may be a false report and they won't be here before dark. It's best not to disturb their nerves or they will all be expecting a torpedo, and they have plenty to think about."

Ever since Wemyss' visit to Kephala on November 30th the first preparations for withdrawal had been in hand and 10,000 sick, chiefly the victims of the blizzard, evacuated from the Peninsula. When on December 10th definite orders for the withdrawal had been received, his and General Birdwood's Staffs, as he wrote

*worked hard and unremittingly at the preparations involving so much elaborate detail, reminiscent of those days ten months ago when we were occupied with other plans

* "The Navy in the Dardanelles," p. 234.

somewhat similar but under such different circumstances. Then, buoyed up by the hopes of victory and with the minarets of Constantinople as our goal, we were about to land an army; now, to save the same force from destruction, we were about to withdraw it; then we could count on favourable weather to assist us, now we could only expect gales and hope they might be averted. How vain appeared now the sacrifices incurred! How useless the loss of precious lives! Our earnest prayer was that they should not be increased during the final act of the tragedy.

From that date onwards a gradual and systematic withdrawal of men, guns, ammunition, stores, and animals had taken place nightly, an operation necessitating the greatest care not to attract the enemy's attention. During all this time a show was made of landing animals and stores; creaking wagons made their way up to the front, muleteers and carters were ordered to raise as much dust as possible with their few remaining animals—at night, lights were left burning in the now deserted hospital tents. In short, every device ingenuity could suggest was made use of to hoodwink the enemy. The transports and reinforcing ships had carefully to be kept out of sight at Aliki and Kephalo in Imbros, while a strong and continuous aircraft patrol drove off any reconnoitring hostile aeroplanes.

No less than 44,000 men, 130 guns, and 8,000 animals had been withdrawn in eight nights without a hitch, but the most difficult part of the operation had yet to come. Owing to the restricted number of small craft available, even with the assistance of Admiral Fremantle's Squadron and boats, the 40,000 remaining men were the utmost number which could be dealt with in the two nights, December 18-19 and 19-20, which had been fixed for the final stage.

Captain Corbett of the *Glory*, with Captain Unwin of *River Clyde* fame as beach-master, and Captain Hon. A. Boyle of the *Bacchante* were working in close co-operation with Generals Byng and Godley at Suvla and Anzac respectively,

as they had done all these weeks past. But there remained one great anxiety—the weather.

All the hospital clearing stations with part of their medical staff had been left intact, and it was hoped that an Armistice might be arranged to evacuate the wounded, while in Mudros and in all the Mediterranean hospitals preparations had been made for 30,000 patients.

The weather, perfect for the last ten days, was still holding on, and the morning of the 18th broke fair and calm. Punctually after dark, at 6.45 p.m., transports and troop-carriers steamed up to their berth and anchored. Wemyss and Birdwood embarked on the destroyer *Arno* at 9 p.m. and spent the night passing up and down the coast—but in truth there was little to see; 21,000 men were being embarked, yet all was still; with clockwork regularity one by one the transports glided noiselessly into their positions, filled and steamed off, and so accurately was the time-table adhered to, both by the troops and by the ships, that the arrangements were carried out to the minute. By dawn the night's work was over and all traces of what had happened had disappeared.

The next twenty-four hours were tense with anxiety; not only for the Generals and their thinly manned trenches, but also for the sailors who had noted indications of a change in the weather—yet all was to go well.

*In the evening I embarked in the light cruiser *Chatham* in company of General Birdwood, and from the bridge of that ship lying off the Peninsula awaited events. There was as little evidence of any great undertaking as there had been the night before, and the stillness was again only interrupted by the occasional sounds of firing. The transports arrived with the same silence and the same regularity; the whole operation was again carried out with the precision of a peace manoeuvre. Little conversation passed between the General and myself, absorbed as we were in our thoughts. Mine re-

* "The Navy in the Dardanelles," p. 239.

verted to that early morning eight months ago, when I stood on the bridge of another ship, beside another General, intently watching the gallant Lancashire Fusiliers as they had quietly got into the boats for the unforgettable attack on Helles. Now, as then, silence and darkness were the prevailing features, and it was as difficult on this evening as it had been on that morning to realize that momentous events were taking place. I thought of all the gallant souls who had found their graves on the Peninsula we were now abandoning and deplored the useless sacrifice. I wondered how the Turks would employ their army, released by this evacuation, and prayed that our Government might yet awake to the true state of affairs at Helles before it was too late. As the hours crept slowly on and the embarkation continued without any signs of incident, the load of anxiety of the last few weeks seemed to fall away and the certainty of success, or at least of a disaster averted, gradually gained possession of me; the tension was past—moral fatigue gave way to physical weariness and I slept.

At 4.30 a.m. I was aroused by the receipt of a prearranged signal from the beach at Anzac proclaiming the welcome news that the last man had left the shore.

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It was all over. The evacuation was complete. Where a possible loss of 30,000 men had been computed one only was missing, and whether he was drowned or lost in the scrub, or accidentally killed, was never ascertained.

This remarkable achievement was the result of a combination of circumstances; faultless staff work, perfect discipline, clever devices for hoodwinking the enemy, mutual confidence between officers and men, hearty co-operation between the two Services and finally good-fortune as regards weather. Had any of these factors failed, the termination must have been far different.

Thus the tragedy of the Dardanelles was to close on an unexampled feat of arms, admired by friend and foe alike.

As long as war exists (so wrote a German military critic) the evacuation of the Arni Burnu and Anafarta fronts will

stand in the eyes of all students of the strategy of retreat as a masterpiece which up to now has never been attained.

Blissfully ignorant of what had been going on, it was only the blazing dumps, the abandoned stores set on fire, which finally attracted the Turks' attention and aroused their suspicions. They began to shell the beaches; so did our ships left behind with orders to complete the destruction, and thus at one moment English and Turk were alike vigorously pouring shells on a deserted beach.

When, however, day broke and it became light, the Turks began to rub their eyes and to realize what had happened. Vanishing like a phantom army, the whole British force had in the night noiselessly stolen away, and their amazement was only equalled by their exultation.

They were at their last gasp. To the activities of our submarines in the Marmora had been added within the last few weeks the destruction by naval fire of Kavak bridge and the damage done to the roads. Their supplies were now cut off. Without food, without ammunition they were on the point of capitulating. Yet a few days longer—a few hours even—and Constantinople might have been ours and the war shortened by three years.

Their victory was as complete as it was unexpected and to be fraught with far-reaching consequences. It had banged, barred, and bolted the door between Russia and her Western allies, thus bringing about her ultimate collapse, it had heightened Turkish prestige as much as it had lowered our own, and finally released numberless divisions which, reinforcing their armies in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine, were eventually to cost us rivers of blood and millions of treasure.

A strong gale had sprung up by the time Wemyss returned to Mudros, to find a telegram offering him the East Indies command and to learn that Admiral de Robeck was

returning next day. They met on the best of terms, on which they were ever to remain, and on Christmas Eve Wemyss left the island where for ten months he had laboured so zealously, so unremittingly, with so much devotion and, alas! so much in vain.

CHAPTER IX

EGYPT

WHEN Wemyss, accompanied by his Staff, and joined in Paris by his wife, arrived in London, it was to meet with a most flattering and appreciative welcome; the Government's gratitude had already been shown by the bestowal of the K.C.B., and Mr. Asquith had referred to him in the House of Commons in eulogistic terms. And indeed when he looked back on how with neither help nor assistance from the home authorities, without even a proper Staff, only a handful of devoted men, he had out of nothing built up a base which in a few weeks had become one of the busiest ports of the world, how "charged with the preparations of the naval part of the combined operations" he had in the face of the most violent opposition succeeded in landing an army on the Gallipoli Peninsula and after eight months in withdrawing that same army without casualties he felt he could do so with justifiable pride.

He went down to Sandringham to be knighted, on which occasion the King conveyed him his thanks in the most laudatory manner, but what moved him most of all was when Lord Kitchener, so stern and undemonstrative as a rule, on acknowledging to him his indebtedness nearly broke down when he confessed to the agony of those sleepless nights spent picturing to himself the massacres on the beaches which he had thought inevitable.

After a very busy week in London, innumerable interviews at the Admiralty, deluged with advice from experts on Eastern questions, Mark Sykes, Aubrey Herbert who it was arranged was to come on his Staff, Fitzmaurice from the Constantinople Embassy and others, he left again on January 8th, spending two days in Paris to see Admiral Lacaze, Minister of Marine, a pre-war acquaintance, and the Directors of the Suez Canal, whose property he was

setting forth to defend. On January 13th he was in Rome, where he parted from his wife, who returned to Switzerland, and the next day at Taranto, whence he sailed to Malta to join his Flagship, now again H.M.S. *Euryalus*.

Malta he had always loved.

I have seen so many old friends, and, as you know, I always like the place. All the people are so welcoming. I mean the cabmen, the shopkeepers, the bumboat-men, etc. I dined with the Methuens, quite nice and simple and gentlemanlike. . . .

Malta was now the headquarters of the French Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Dartige de Fournet, with whom and his Staff, on which he found many old friends, French naval officers, there was much business to transact, so that it was only on January 20th that he started:

steaming along in glorious sunny weather with a beautiful smooth blue sea—real Mediterranean weather—and we expect to arrive at Port Said on Sunday. . . . We are being escorted by a destroyer, for being now a C.-in-C. the Admiral would not let me go without. We pick up wireless messages being passed by de Robeck to his various ships, and it seems so odd to think that they have nothing to do with me. I am really pleased to think that the spring will not find me at Mudros. The gales at that season are horrible. I am looking forward immensely to taking up my command, for I am sure I shall find everything of enormous interest and I expect I shall be very busy, and that is what I like.

His command, the East Indies Station, extended from Port Said to Singapore, and while under normal conditions his headquarters were Bombay and Ceylon, it was evident that he would have to exercise it from Egypt so long as the Turkish menace on the Egyptian frontier subsisted.

Even before Turkey had actually declared war, the reconquest of Egypt had been one of the principal ambitions of Enver Pasha and the Young Turkish party, and its realization so much accorded with German aims on the Suez Canal

that this community of interests must have gone far towards bringing about that secret agreement said to have been signed at the beginning of August which eventually threw Turkey into the arms of the Central Powers.

To England any menace to the Suez Canal must needs constitute a grave danger, for, important as is the free passage of shipping through the Isthmus to other nations, to her in whose chain of communications with India and Australia it is the most important as it is the most vulnerable link, that freedom is and must ever be a matter of supreme necessity.

In February 1915, a few months after the outbreak of war, the enemy, after concentrating a large force at Beersheba and transporting stores and water across the desert, had launched an attack against the Canal, which, with great pluck and determination, they had at one point managed to cross. But beaten back by our forces naval and military—an action in which two French men-of-war, the *Requin* and *Entrecasteaux*, in Lake Timsah greatly distinguished themselves, the Turks retreated and the attack was not renewed, with the exception of a few spasmodic attempts to mine the Canal and such like.

This immunity was indubitably owing to the Gallipoli campaign then being waged, and which occupied all the enemy's forces, but with the reinforcement of their armies, the result of our withdrawal from the Peninsula, there was every likelihood of the attack being repeated.

Nor was it from the East alone that danger threatened.

In the West, the Libyan Desert separating Egypt from the Italian colony of Cyrenaica was inhabited by fanatical Arab tribes, members of the brotherhood of the Senoussi, one of the fraternities partly religious and partly political so prevalent amongst Mohammedans. Their sympathies were known to be strongly pro-Turkish, and all through the year 1915 their attitude of hostility towards Egypt had become

increasingly threatening, so that trouble on the Western frontier had for long been regarded as inevitable. When on November 3rd 1915 H.M.S. *Tara*, a boarding steamer employed in patrolling the coast, was sunk off Sollum, the Egyptian Western outpost, by a German submarine, and the ninety-one surviving members of her crew made prisoners by the Senoussi, to whom strong remonstrances were addressed, the only result was an attack on Sollum. The garrison, a small detachment of Egyptian soldiers under Colonel Snow, held out and were eventually, though with considerable difficulty, withdrawn to Marsa Matruh, from where they delivered a series of attacks, but without much success. The reoccupation of Sollum had therefore for the moment to be abandoned. Matters had reached a climax; all pretence was now dropped, and Egypt found herself at war with her fanatical neighbour.

The peril lay less in the military situation thus created than in the effect that a Senoussi action might have on the Egyptian population the uncertainty of whose attitude threatened at any moment to become a source of danger, for a wave of fanaticism creating internal disturbances was bound to jeopardize our already somewhat precarious hold on the country and on the existence of law and order in the Valley of the Nile depends the security of the great waterway that is the link between East and West.

This, therefore, was the situation when Wemyss arrived in Egypt to relieve Vice-Admiral Sir R. Peirse, whose period of command expired on January 29th.

Sunday, Jan. 23. Port Said. Arrived at Port Said this morning in beautiful weather. I have been looking over matters and find there is much that does not suit my views at all. It's a nuisance because I hate having to change things immediately that I assume control. Some people seem to have gone to sleep here and I find them absorbed in small details which should be the work of midshipmen. It's all very

interesting and I foresee lots of hard work, but much of it work that I like, though I am afraid that there are some people who will not appreciate the change. . . . Peirse doesn't take his departure until Wednesday, and as soon as ever he has gone I am off for a little tour of inspection up the Canal and to Alexandria and possibly Cairo. All interesting and amusing.

Jan. 29. British Residency, Cairo. I have been having a real strenuous week since arriving here. I find things in an awful muddle and chaos reigns complete. Of course I cannot put matters right all at once, for to pick up the ropes of the complications is not easy in itself—Indian Government, Egyptian Government, Transport Service and proper naval work seem to have got into an inextricable entanglement. I am learning all this gradually. I have already visited Suez, Ismailia, Alexandria and am now at Cairo. . . . As a matter of fact I rather enjoy putting matters straight and I find everybody only too ready to help and they welcome my advent. . . . The Canal people are exceedingly civil and nice and put at my disposal a charming yacht (the *Aigrette*) to go down the Canal. I have made friends with the military C.-in-C. and done a lot of business with him (all this at Ismailia) and I have inspected all our people at Suez—been to Alexandria and inquired into all the trouble there and now am at Cairo, staying at the Residency. To-morrow I go to make my bow to the Sultan and consult with the military authorities and eventually I am going to Ismailia, where I intend to make my headquarters during my stay in Egypt. . . . I have already met many old Mudros and Gallipoli friends. Birdwood is staying in the house here and our meeting was most cordial.

If chaos reigned in naval affairs, it did so equally in military ones.

All Wemyss' policy, a policy he never deviated from, was based on co-operation, and his first care therefore on arrival had been to get into touch with the military authorities. Great, however, was his surprise to find there existed some uncertainty as to the spheres of authority of the three

increasingly threatening, so that trouble on the Western frontier had for long been regarded as inevitable. When on November 3rd 1915 H.M.S. *Tara*, a boarding steamer employed in patrolling the coast, was sunk off Sollum, the Egyptian Western outpost, by a German submarine, and the ninety-one surviving members of her crew made prisoners by the Senoussi, to whom strong remonstrances were addressed, the only result was an attack on Sollum. The garrison, a small detachment of Egyptian soldiers under Colonel Snow, held out and were eventually, though with considerable difficulty, withdrawn to Marsa Matruh, from where they delivered a series of attacks, but without much success. The reoccupation of Sollum had therefore for the moment to be abandoned. Matters had reached a climax; all pretence was now dropped, and Egypt found herself at war with her fanatical neighbour.

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Sunday, Jan. 23. Port Said. Arrived at Port Said this morning in beautiful weather. I have been looking over matters and find there is much that does not suit my views at all. It's a nuisance because I hate having to change things immediately that I assume control. Some people seem to have gone to sleep here and I find them absorbed in small details which should be the work of midshipmen. It's all very

interesting and I foresee lots of hard work, but much of it work that I like, though I am afraid that there are some people who will not appreciate the change. . . . Peirse doesn't take his departure until Wednesday, and as soon as ever he has gone I am off for a little tour of inspection up the Canal and to Alexandria and possibly Cairo. All interesting and amusing.

Jan. 29. British Residency, Cairo. I have been having a real strenuous week since arriving here. I find things in an awful muddle and chaos reigns complete. Of course I cannot put matters right all at once, for to pick up the ropes of the complications is not easy in itself—Indian Government, Egyptian Government, Transport Service and proper naval work seem to have got into an inextricable entanglement. I am learning all this gradually. I have already visited Suez, Ismailia, Alexandria and am now at Cairo. . . . As a matter of fact I rather enjoy putting matters straight and I find everybody only too ready to help and they welcome my advent. . . . The Canal people are exceedingly civil and nice and put at my disposal a charming yacht (the *Aigrette*) to go down the Canal. I have made friends with the military C.-in-C. and done a lot of business with him (all this at Ismailia) and I have inspected all our people at Suez—been to Alexandria and inquired into all the trouble there and now am at Cairo, staying at the Residency. To-morrow I go to make my bow to the Sultan and consult with the military authorities and eventually I am going to Ismailia, where I intend to make my headquarters during my stay in Egypt. . . . I have already met many old Mudros and Gallipoli friends. Birdwood is staying in the house here and our meeting was most cordial.

If chaos reigned in naval affairs, it did so equally in military ones.

All Wemyss' policy, a policy he never deviated from, was based on co-operation, and his first care therefore on arrival had been to get into touch with the military authorities. Great, however, was his surprise to find there existed some uncertainty as to the spheres of authority of the three

Generals on the spot: Sir Archibald Murray, C.-in-C. of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces, who had only just arrived; Sir J. Maxwell, who since October 14th had been commanding the troops in Egypt with headquarters at Cairo; and Sir E. Altham, his old friend and comrade of Mudros days, commanding the lines of communication and also established in the capital. The confusion engendered by these overlapping commands was complete, and though eventually put right, illustrated in a striking fashion the ignorance of the most elementary rules of organization and the loose thinking indulged in by the home authorities. The then prevailing disorder is best demonstrated by a characteristic incident Wemyss soon after was obliged to deal with:

*Shortly after my arrival I found myself called upon to settle a case of so-called mutiny which showed the haphazard manner in which portions of the troops had been raised throughout the Empire. A bridging section of Australian Engineers who, like all their fellow-countrymen, had performed splendid service at Anzac, were confined to camp for refusing duty. When the case came to be looked into, it was found that military authority had no authority to deal with the offenders, since they had been enrolled under the Naval Discipline Act. It appeared that after the evacuation these men, whilst awaiting embarkation for Egypt, had been told that they could not, in accordance with Army procedure, receive the pay due to them until their arrival at their new destination. But Army procedure was nothing to these Antipodean sailors who wanted their money and bluntly intimated "no pay, no work." It was as unpleasant for me to have to deal with a case of insubordination committed by men working with the Army, as it was pleasant for the military authorities to find themselves extricated from the horns of a dilemma, for if the charge of mutiny were upheld, the extreme penalty would have been such as assuredly to light a flame of indignation and resentment in the Dominions.

I went thoroughly into the case and came to the conclusion that it had been mishandled from the beginning. The

men, half-disciplined, were ignorant of military ways, while the officers had been lacking in tact, so that to give the name of mutiny to such an offence seemed to be magnifying a mole-hill into a mountain.

When I arrived at the camp to investigate into the matter, I found sentries posted and no one allowed to leave. For more than three weeks the whole section had been under arrest and there could be no doubt but that the men were feeling the disgrace. They could not understand why such a grave view of their conduct had been taken. They were drawn up in a line without arms for my inspection and seldom have I seen a finer body of men or one that looked less like mutineers. A square was formed and I addressed them, pointing out the stupidity of their action and the grave interpretation that might well be placed upon it. Their expression plainly indicated anxiety, and when I told them that I considered the disgrace of their having been under arrest was in itself sufficient punishment and the incident now over, only, I hoped, to be remembered by them as a warning in the future, their relief was almost audible and became quite so when the parade was dismissed, for in reply from a demand from a sergeant for three cheers for the Admiral, I found myself the object of an ovation from the so-called mutineers as embarrassing as it was *mal à propos*.

The difficulties as to the military command were finally solved by an arrangement by which Sir A. Murray took command of all action on the Canal and to the eastward, whilst Sir J. Maxwell remained responsible for matters in Egypt itself and on the Western frontier. Thus it was that Wemyss was to be associated with Sir Archibald for operations against the Turks, and with Sir John for those impending against the Senoussi in the west.

The former had established himself at Ismailia, the headquarters of the Canal Company, and Wemyss thought he could do no better than follow his example, for he found it would be more convenient to administer his extensive and scattered command from there than from Port Said as had

his predecessor. He lost no time therefore in transferring the office to his Flagship the *Euryalus*, which proceeded to take up a berth in Lake Timsah, a central position enabling him to reach Cairo, Suez or Alexandria with the least possible delay. Ismailia he considered

a perfect paradise compared to Port Said. Quite pretty it is with lots of trees and flowers—a sort of tiny independent republic belonging to the Canal Company. Everybody very nice and kind. I have a motor-car belonging to King George V and horses belonging to the Army.

The Canal Company did everything to make his stay as easy and pleasant as possible. With both the Administrator and Comtesse de Serrionne he was soon on the very best of terms, all the more as they had mutual Paris friends.

Madame de Serrionne, Madame de Castellane's friend, is a very agreeable woman and I see a good deal of her, and there are some very nice Frenchmen connected with the Canal.

At his special request Admiral Lacaze had appointed Comte Jean de Chabannes la Palice, a cousin of Lady Wemyss', on his staff, where he proved himself the ideal liaison officer, all the more as, the owner of large property in Tunis, his long experience of Arabs and knowledge of their language was to be of great value.

You can't think what a blessing to me Chabannes is. He is intelligent, a man of the world, very tactful and moreover the French Admiral pays attention to what he says and I therefore find my way much smoothed by him. He is most particularly useful about intelligence work.

Altogether he was delighted with his Staff, to which he had received further additions in the shape of Commander Marriott and another Flag Lieutenant Ph. Neville:

Bevan and Miller of course are as near perfection as possible. Marriott and Neville both a great success too I think.

Luckily I have such a good Staff that I can decentralize on to them to my heart's content and know that everything is well.

This was the more necessary that the move of Naval Head Quarters had entailed an alteration in the local organization, and Port Said, Alexandria, and Suez were now created into separate Naval centres, each under the command of its own Senior Officer who henceforth carried out his multifarious duties independently.

Feb. 3, 1916. . . . My visit only confirmed what my experiences at Port Said had taught me. I quite enjoyed my little tour. Marriott and Neville were charming companions and looked after me properly. At Alexandria I stayed with the Postmaster General of Egypt, an old acquaintance. Whilst at Cairo I was at the Residency. The McMahons have been more than civil and hospitable. I had an interview with the Sultan, who is a particularly nice man and has the character of being honest and straight. He impressed me very much. His talk was sensible and very kindly. He does not like the French evidently and looks with a jealous eye on their hold on Syria. He would much prefer to see British ships patrolling that coast than French ones. I like the French immensely, but I must say they are not easy to deal with. I had a long conversation with Maxwell, all about the situation on the Western Egyptian frontier. The situation is complicated, and the complications arise from the so-called diplomatists. Even when fighting they are always for holding back, and taking half-measures, never a good plan, but with Orientals absolutely fatal.

Feb. 11. . . . Ismailia is a strange place. A charming little oasis, in ordinary times entirely inhabited by and run by the Canal Company, all of whose officials are delightful. It's like a little republic which at the commencement of the war made a feeble sort of attempt to retain its neutrality. I need hardly tell you that such proved entirely impossible, and now of course their one object and aim in life is to defend their property, the Canal. I can't tell you what their kindness and hospitality is, and they make everything as

easy as possible for us. The place is of course overrun by the army. It is said by some people that the natives of Egypt are ready to rise at a moment's notice against us—by others that they are loyal and dependable. I expect that the truth lies somewhere about half-way between the two, and that whilst Egypt is safe and they making money they are perfectly content to be pro-British, whilst if they thought that the Turks had a chance of getting the best of us, they would be quite ready to receive a conquering Turkish army with open arms. Everybody seems agreed that the Sultan is honest and pro-British, and I can quite believe it. He seemed to me to be a singularly upright and gentleman-like man, and of course our lot is his now.

Personally I am of opinion that the Turks do not intend to attack Egypt. The difficulties in their way are stupendous, and they must see them even more clearly than we do. The more I see of the country on the Peninsula and of our defences, the more do I feel sure they never can do anything.

I am pining to get away to the Persian Gulf, where I am much more inclined to think they mean business, but of course I cannot stir from here at present. I am heartily sick of so-called diplomatists and intelligence (save the mark) officers. They create bogies and their procrastination in the hopes of settling matters amicably—with Orientals and with the world ablaze, I ask you!!—makes me quite sick. In the meantime the Russians are apparently closing in from the North-East towards Bagdad, and I do not look on the situation there as absolutely bad. The Arab tribes are the very devil. Of course I know nothing really about them, but I feel in my heart of hearts that those who pretend they do are in reality nearly as ignorant as I am. . . .

Feb. 19. We are all rejoicing in the fall of Erzeroum, which can but make an enormous difference to us both in Egypt and Mesopotamia. It threatens the Turkish line of communication to both places and must be a terrible blow to the Turks.

I have had a good deal more talk and correspondence with Sir H. McMahon. The situation as regards the Arabs is extraordinarily complicated, but I still think the complications are caused by us. It is very difficult for a man like myself, with no former experience in dealing with these

people, to pick up the hang of matters. No doubt that Holy Places such as Mecca and Medina play a tremendous rôle in these Eastern politics, but I am of opinion that our politicians and agents have allowed these ideas to get hold of them to too great a degree. In fact, like all specialists, they are inclined to think only of their own specialization and ignore other factors.

The Arabs, they say, are all inclined to be friendly to us. They have an odd way of showing their friendship, I retort. The Arab is obliged to hide his pro-British proclivities from the Turks, they go on to say, because if suspected the Turks would wipe them off the face of the earth. How they can make this tally with their repeated assurances that action against the Arabs would probably produce a Jihad throughout the Moslem world I don't quite understand, for surely a Jihad would have to be waged against the German, who is as much an "infidel" as the Britisher.

Cases have arisen over and over again where the Arabs have with impunity broken their faith with us and openly derided our power. I cannot help thinking that such acts being allowed to go unpunished must have a very bad effect on Arab outlook upon British prestige and thereby cause as much harm to us as their joining in with the Turks. They *hate* the Turks, and I do not think that any such alliance would stand any great strain. All this affects me very much because of the Red Sea Patrol, which is being managed (always under the politician) in a manner which I don't approve of. . . .

The Senoussi business is another case in point. So far as I can make out, it is entirely the fault of the politicians that we are having any trouble with them at all. Had they shown only a decent amount of firmness at the commencement of the war the question would never have assumed the proportions that it has. Now we have to fight, and beat them, and a troublesome business it is. We are going to have a final slap at them shortly, and I hope you will hear of some success. It will be the first offensive operation (from a naval point of view) in which I shall have had an entirely free hand. I am much taken up naturally by the defence of the Canal. This is purely a military matter in which the ships are taking but a secondary part. They can only act *in* the

Canal, not in the desert, and since the attack must come *from* the desert (if it comes at all) the initiative naturally lies with the Army. . . .

Truly we are a wonderful nation and the military organization out here as produced by the War Office is marvellous in its complexity and unwieldiness, and really it is only due to the loyalty and good feeling of the Generals that it does not break down altogether. On paper it looks and sounds simple enough, but in practice it is awful. Three Generals all overlapping each other! It demands as much faith as the Athanasian Creed, which it strongly resembles! I am the sort of happy hunting-ground on which any of them can tread without difficulty, so I find myself very much appealed to. However, I am careful never to give myself away and keep on the very friendliest terms with them all. . . . I think the soldiers are much more satisfied with the state of affairs at the War Office now that Robertson is there. Kitchener, I am afraid, is not the big man that it was hoped he might be—but, give the devil his due, I don't think there is another man in England who could have done what he has done in the way of making armies. The fact is that it is impossible for a man to be the Only Man nowadays. The multiplicity of work caused by rapid communication renders such a thing physically impossible, and I doubt if even Napoleon would have been the man he was had he lived in these days. The general knowledge of organization has so increased that there is hardly room for any one man to tower over his fellows.

His life was very full and

work much more interesting than at Mudros, but it takes a good deal of time to get hold of the reins.

He was soon in close touch with the Army and

see no reason why the co-operation should be anything but good and pleasant.

He saw

a good deal of the soldiers and do not find them difficult to deal with on the whole. There is not that stretch of 60 miles

of sea here that there was at Gallipoli and which they found so difficult to realize.

Sir Archibald Murray he liked very much

We get on very well and work together very amicably. All the changes and reforms are turning out trumps and things are running much more easily and smoothly.

But his task was not an easy one.

Mar. 3. . . . I find I have to use the greatest tact and care in interfering with all these people. However, up till now I have succeeded in keeping them all in a good humour and yet have egged them on. There exists a naval mentality which thinks that anything beyond the handling of a ship or a naval gun is either a purely diplomatic or a purely military question. I, on the contrary, butt in everywhere, for my faith is that everything English must have a naval side. The sea—that is where in the long run England brings pressure to bear on our enemies, be it in the North Sea, the Channel, the Red Sea or the Pacific. In the end the enemy always finds himself confronted by the Stone Wall of our Navy. The fact is that for us Naval and Military power are dependent on each other, and you can't get away from it. I should like in the dim future to try and get formed a purely executive naval and military machine whose whole duty would be to work out combined military and naval strategy in whose hands the broad lines of diplomacy should lie. Your father had a knowledge—and a great one—of these broad lines, but I am quite sure that none of the Ambassadors of the present day have, and the result is not only the slipshod manner in which we tumbled into the war, but the unhappy manner of dealing with it afterwards. You can't imagine the amount of jealousy that exists—not between Generals and Admirals, but between Governments. I am constantly finding myself in the position of having to disarm the French of their suspicions. Luckily their naval officers understand and play up to us; that at any rate is my experience. . . .

Egypt is a curious mixture of the ancient and the modern. Alongside of ploughs identical to those in use in the days

of Abraham are to be seen vast barrages and electric trams, and, hustling each other in the streets, are cocottes with clothes from Paris, grave old Arabs in magnificent but simple flowing robes, and half-naked fellaheen who are wearing the selfsame rags as did their far-back ancestors in the days of the Pharaohs. Pyramids thousands of years old stand cheek by jowl with modern *hôtels de luxe* in the desert. Donkeys, camels, motor-cars and trams all help to block the way in the streets of Cairo, which are crowded with English and Australian soldiers, smug Egyptian officials and Bedouins.

A trip down the Canal is a very wonderful sight. Native boats filled with stores for making roads in the desert, camel patrols, Indian patrols, motor-launches, supply ships, men-of-war. Natives almost stark naked and sweating soldiers are all busy making roads, railways, trenches and every other sort of appliance and necessity for defending the country against an invader who I don't believe will ever invade. However, it is all a matter of insurance and the existence of a gun is justified, I suppose, by its never being used.

Mar. 5. . . . Aubrey Herbert has at length joined me, and very glad I am to have him. He is extremely intelligent, very agreeable and has just that touch with the F.O., etc., which may be invaluable to me a little later on. He tells me Sir E. Grey has quite lost his nerve and is literally frightened of any subject that requires negotiation with any of the Allies. A nice state of affairs, and I suppose that that is one of the reasons of our many diplomatic failures. . . . The situation in Mesopotamia is likely to develop speedily, but, Good Lord! how intricate is the situation. So far as the Arabs are concerned I am in hopes that my views are beginning to be favourably regarded by the diplomats and I hope before long to be able to do something to show the Turk that he isn't going to have it entirely his way in these parts.

The Arab Turk problem he had always considered very complicated.

I think we are very much to blame. The same old, old story—words, and no deeds—always hanging back in the hopes that diplomacy (and such diplomacy) may bring

about what can only be brought about by hard knocks—hard knocks which at one time it would have been quite easy to give, but becomes harder and harder as time goes on.

This problem however was only one of many amongst which at that time was the growing menace of enemy submarines in the Mediterranean.

To meet their increasing activities, all the more as in defiance of all hitherto accepted rules of warfare they had taken to torpedoing and sinking defenceless merchant ships without warning, the Allies had been obliged to adopt more stringent methods of protection. By a Franco-British Convention the Commander-in-Chiefship of the Mediterranean had at the outbreak of the war devolved upon a French Admiral—but fully occupied in watching the Austrian Fleet and preventing its escape from the Adriatic, without moreover requisite vessels or organization, he could do little, while the British Admirals in the Levant and Malta were much in the same position. The only alternative therefore lay in dividing the Mediterranean into areas, each one to be allotted to and controlled by one of the Allies. The Eastern area fell to England who in Alexandria and Port Said possessed suitable bases from which small vessels could conveniently operate. Thus their importance increased considerably necessitating more staff, difficult to procure, and more organization and decentralization which caused Wemyss to pay several flying visits to these parts.

It was during one of these visits that his eyes were opened to the difficulties under which the Naval Transport work in Egypt had been carried on since the commencement of the war. When hostilities broke out there was no organization of any kind. Admiral Robinson, a retired naval officer, who had for some time successfully filled the post of Director of Ports and Lighthouses in the Egyptian Service, stepped into the breach, took matters into his own hands and ran the transport with the officers belonging to his department

without emoluments or orders from the Admiralty, and continued to do so until the matter was represented to the War Office by the military authorities in Egypt.

To me who had seen the result at Mudros, it seemed incredible, and if there were any mistakes made, it certainly was not the fault of those on the spot, who without encouragement or even proper authority had voluntarily taken upon themselves the task and for more than eighteen months carried out the work without a breakdown.

Before Wemyss' arrival, however, the Admiralty had become aware of the situation and had sent out Captain Allenby with a suitable staff to take the matter in hand.

Wemyss was often at Cairo, welcomed at the Residency with open arms both by Sir H. and Lady McMahon, who are more than kind and hospitable. I think they like me and are really pleased to have me here.

Sociable to a degree, he enjoyed these visits very much; he was always running across friends and relations and was soon as well known and popular a figure as he had ever been elsewhere. His "honours" had brought down upon him a torrent of congratulations:

I have received shoals and shoals of letters from every description of person ranging from Sir Ian Hamilton to George Brown of East Wemyss. All so nice.

He ever clung to Wemyss and all its associations:

I came across a stoker from West Wemyss the other day in one of the ships. I have had him transferred to the *Euryalus* and pass the local paper to him every week. He tells me that the place is quite denuded of men, that they have all gone—I am glad we have not lagged behind.

Man of the world and great gentleman, qualities prized above all by Orientals to whom pride of race and pride of birth ever make the strongest appeal, he speedily won the heart of Sultan Hussein.

Mar. 15. . . . I spent two days in Cairo and went to luncheon with the Sultan and had a most exhausting two hours, because from 12.50 to 3 p.m. he and I talked incessantly with no one else to help. To talk for two solid hours to a man one has only seen once before for a few minutes, and that in French, is I think about as exhausting an ordeal, both mentally and physically, as I have ever gone through. We sat down twelve to luncheon, Neville and I being the only strangers, and no one except the Sultan and I ever opened their mouths except to put into them food, which I must say was *excellent* but rather too rich. Neville, at the other side of the table, tried at first to utter a few platitudes to his next-door neighbour, but as his remarks were received with nothing but grunts, his efforts were soon brought to an end. So there was I talking to the Sultan and nine solid fat Egyptians listening with all their ears. I must say I found the Sultan a very agreeable and intelligent man with very liberal ideas and high ideals. He told me (when we were alone, and not before his gaping entourage) that nothing would have induced him to accept the Sultanship, had it not been that he realized that England, and England only, would and could give that honest protection which Egypt always must have. He does not think that Egyptians could govern themselves for more generations to come than it is ridiculous to think about. He loves his Egyptians, and told me that he likes the English in spite of their many mistakes. All countries in such a position, he said, would make mistakes, nearly all would make more than England has made, and none would act with such honesty. A tribute I think which has been fairly earned. We parted with extreme cordiality. He said he recognized in me a man of the world and an honest gentleman to whom his heart went out! I found it extremely difficult to answer these encomiums in a fitting manner, but politely murmured that I had also found much sympathy with him. In the meantime all his officials were marvelling at what was occurring, because the ordinary interview generally only lasts for about one-third of the time. I really cannot imagine what I can have done or said to make such an impression on him. He dislikes and distrusts the Italians, and told me they had done nothing but harm in Egypt. The French he likes, but distrusts, and he thinks

that all Germans have gone mad. He is naturally in a great state of mind about Turkey, which he regards as absolutely ruined whatever happens.

When, on an occasion later on, the Sultan was extolling the virtues of the British race to an Englishman he was receiving in audience, he quoted as his three typical examples: Queen Victoria, the late Marquess of Salisbury, and "my dear Admiral, Sir Rosslyn Wemyss."

The expedition against the Senoussis which Wemyss ever since his arrival had been pressing for, had in conjunction with the Army just taken place. The enemy fled without offering resistance and Sollum was reoccupied on March 14th.

It was very well organized and arranged, for which Burmester deserves and I hope will get much credit. Now we have got back all the Egyptian coast-line and I hope the soldiers will keep it.

He had intended himself being present at the capture of Sollum and had actually embarked on board a sloop in Alexandria Harbour when a telegram with a report, afterwards to prove unfounded, that the *Goeben* had broken through the Dardanelles, obliged him to remain in case of her attempting to attack Egypt.

The affair, however, would have turned out very tame indeed, had it not been for the Duke of Westminster and his armoured cars, which pursued and came up with the enemy, charged them, and captured all their guns and many Turkish officers. They then went off through a trackless and uncharted part of the Libyan Desert to rescue the ninety-one British prisoners, the crew of the *Tara*, who had been handed over by their Turkish captors to the Senoussi.

These unfortunate victims of submarine warfare had for nearly four months been undergoing untold miseries; maltreated, starved, huddled at nights into an empty well, laid

low by dysentery, without a doctor, without medicine, without even the barest necessities, their condition was indeed a pitiable one. Their Captain, Gwatkin Williams, had tried, in the hope of obtaining help, to escape to Sollum, unaware that that place was in the hands of the enemy. But, recaptured and brought back, his men, powerless to interfere, were obliged helplessly to witness indignity upon indignity being showered upon him. He was flogged, hit in the face, stoned, and spat upon, even by the Arab women.

Their state became worse and worse: their rations were coming to an end, for weeks they had subsisted on snails, and a little rice; four of their number had already succumbed, and three days before the armoured cars came to their relief even the rice had given out and death from starvation appeared their inevitable fate.

Their rescue, almost a miracle, due to a letter to a Turkish officer picked up by chance on the battlefield, was, as Wemyss wrote, "a very fine performance, full of initiative and dash," for which the Duke of Westminster deserved the greatest credit.

It was by now the middle of March. Any chance of the enemy's offensive before the hot weather was rapidly diminishing, and even the soldiers were beginning to disbelieve in an attack which Wemyss had long deemed improbable. He therefore resolved to visit the other parts of the station, especially Mesopotamia, where he heard the transport service was far from efficient.

Mar. 24. I am leaving here for Aden and the Persian Gulf the day after to-morrow. . . . The last ten days have been extremely busy. I have had to go from one place to another about various matters, but now I think I have everything well settled and established and can leave Egypt with a light heart and clear conscience as far as my job is concerned. I had a farewell audience with the Sultan a few days ago, and again he kept me for about an hour and sent me away with

assurances of respect and even affection! I spent some interesting hours in Cairo going into the political situation up in Mesopotamia, and a most intricate business it is. Aubrey Herbert is making, and has made, it his special study, and I think I shall find him absolutely invaluable. He is a delightful creature to have to work with, because he is a man of ideals as well as ideas, and I sincerely hope that we may be able to do some good work out there. I have for some time thought, and the more I learn the more do I go on thinking that they require new blood on the spot. I suspect the Generals out there of being tired out, and, probably, never very clever and always tied up by red-tape. I think too that I shall be arriving at the right psychological moment, for I do not see how a crisis can be avoided about that time.

In the meantime I have been keeping the enemy quite busy in the Red Sea. It has taken me nearly two months to get over the prejudice of the political officers, but now thank goodness I have them on my side, and I am in hopes that the results may be very quickly apparent. The Indian Government is timorous and bureaucratic, and it looks as though they had lost their nerve. Hesitancy and a general lifting of hands is their attitude, and a very tiresome one it is. The new Viceroy (Lord Chelmsford) passes through here to-morrow, and I am going to accompany him through the Canal from Ismailia to Suez and trust I may be able to put in a few words of wisdom. I don't know him, but everybody tells me he is a nice man and a gentleman and I sincerely trust he may be wise.

The Prince of Wales has arrived out here and is nominally on Sir A. Murray's Staff. He dined with me last night and I thought him a charming boy, inclined to be shy, but when he has got over this, as I think he will, his manner will be charming. . . . He told me that he was very glad to get away from France because he was getting so bored at being so well looked after. How I entered into his feelings! He had a great reception from the Australians and I should think created a very good impression on them. He is pining to come to Mesopotamia with me, but I very much discouraged the idea. . . .

In a way, I am quite sorry to leave Egypt. Everybody has

been extremely kind and I have made many friends; certainly it is a very fascinating country and the desert has an indescribable charm, while the climate at this time of the year is perfectly delightful.

I think that the situation seems slowly but surely to ameliorate all round, Mesopotamia being at present the only spot which is not thoroughly satisfactory. Verdun seems to be all right. The French people here say that its fall would have had a very bad effect in France and that the Government would have quickly fallen, and that is an eventuality they all dread, hateful as they think it. The German losses must have been appalling. The French must have lost heavily too, but not in the same way. The Russian action in the Caucasus and Asia Minor is marvellous. They are a most extraordinary people and are always doing the unexpected. I am wondering if I shall get into actual touch with them in Mesopotamia! Altogether the beginning of 1916 saw the heights of German triumph, and now we should steadily improve. I can't tell you what the concentrated hatred of the French here is for the Germans. At the very word Boche a perfectly different expression comes across their faces—a set, stern look, that requires no words to give it meaning.

But before going to Mesopotamia he was anxious to put in force a reorganization of the Red Sea Patrol, which owing to political exigencies was being carried out at a maximum of expenditure with a minimum of result which he could not but believe would be prejudicial to the aim in view, viz. the weaning of the Arabs from the Turks and their espousal of the cause of the Allies.

He was a strong protagonist of this policy, which later on was to find so brilliant an exponent and so dashing a leader in Colonel Lawrence, and never ceased pressing it on the authorities.

*In Arabia the Indian Government claimed political ascendancy as far North as and including Lith, whilst Egypt did the same from Lith northwards, and I had found that the political agents of the two Governments who were

attached to the Senior Officers of the two Patrols were working entirely independently of each other.

Not only were the points of view of these two Governments entirely dissimilar but their methods of treating the situation were fundamentally different. India's attitude might have been considered as defensive and quiescent, whilst Egypt's was offensive and aggressive. These differences were not the outcome so much of divergencies of point of view as of the different manner in which the two Governments regarded the whole Arabian question. During the war India had signally failed in all her undertakings, with the result that her Government, so to speak, lost its nerve and was inclined to sit down and let matters remain as they were, for fear of their getting worse. Egypt, on the contrary, was in a frame of mind such as to cause her to feel anxious for action with a desire to improve matters.

It had not taken me very long to find this out, and soon after I had assumed command I realized how matters stood, and by way of attempting to bring the two Governments closer together in the matter of Arabia I wished to fuse into one the two Patrols, which hitherto had been operating independently of each other in the Red Sea. The Southern Patrol had been politically advised from India, the Northern one from Egypt, and there had been a hard-and-fast line of demarcation between the two which neither could cross.

Before realizing the fusion I had obtained permission from the two Governments for their respective political officers to occasionally meet, and with this permission as a stepping-stone I reorganized the patrol under the head of Captain Boyle, who henceforth was to be the Senior Naval Officer in the whole of the Red Sea, and I arranged for a conference to take place at Aden whilst I was there on my way to Mesopotamia.

The *Euryalus* reached Aden on March 30th.

The last time I was here in the *Ophir*, just fifteen years ago. How much more interesting now. Here for the first time I meet officials of the Indian Government, and I shall require all my powers of persuasion to make them see through my spectacles.

April 1. At sea. We left Aden early this morning and are to arrive at Muskat on Tuesday, so I go East and eventually to Bushir, after which my movements will be vague. I spent an interesting day at Aden. I began by getting up very early and going out to our lines and from there watching the effect of an attack on the enemy camp by bombs dropped from sea-planes. There is a history attached to this attack which is worth while relating to you, because it may give you an insight into what is going on in these parts. Since last summer there has been a force of some 2,000 Turks sitting outside here threatening us. The force is quite inadequate to take Aden, or indeed to do us any harm, beyond the fact of keeping 2,000 of our men shut up there. On the other hand, we have not enough men or guns at Aden to do anything but keep them out. And so these two forces sit down and look at each other, having occasional skirmishes in which we generally come off best, and so the matter stands. The Turks make no difficulties about allowing the native tribes to trade with Aden because they make them pay an *octroi* to them (the Turks) for passing through their lines. Now all this might be an amusing enough farce at which the Government might well laugh if they did not badly want those 2,000 men and if no further harm was done. Unfortunately further harm *is* done, for the very fact of our not being able to drive those men off helps very much to lessen our prestige amongst the Arabs right away up the Red Sea, even into Egypt, and I shouldn't wonder as far as Mesopotamia itself. Egypt knows it and feels it. I know it and feel it because I am responsible for the safety of the Red Sea. But Aden is under Bombay, who, even if she knows it, does *not* feel it and doesn't care a damn! For many weeks past I have been trying to get India to co-operate with me in putting an end to this state of affairs. Two extra battalions is probably as much as is required to knock the Turks completely out and release 2,000 of our troops for work elsewhere. But India absolutely refuses. So then I say I'll do a bit myself, and will send some of my sea-planes down to attack them. And since they have probably never encountered this mode of warfare before, and have no anti-aircraft guns, I hope for a greater effect physically and morally than might be otherwise expected. India

assents very half-heartedly and informs me that though they have no objection to my doing this on my own account they will not allow the troops in Aden to co-operate, nor even take advantage of any favourable situation my action may create!!! Oh dear, oh dear—isn't the British Empire a marvel? One wonders how on earth it exists at all. Well, we have had our attack, and when all the bombs have been expended the ship with the sea-planes (*H.M.S. Raven*) will return to Egypt, and I am in hopes that much good may result. We shan't know for a few days, but I am quite sure that the good might have been much greater had the Bombay Government been more sympathetic. I have related all this to you because it will give you some idea of the dreadful lack of co-ordination and organization that exists in these outlying parts of the Empire, and of some of the difficulties that a man has when trying to do some useful action. Anyhow, I think it will probably help to arrest the decline of our prestige, added to more energetic steps that I have taken in the Red Sea, viz. the demolition of Turkish forts, etc., which, though not an active menace, by their very existence made the Arabs think that we are incapable of dealing with them. How, I wonder, shall I find matters in Mesopotamia? I have an inkling of how very lethargic the Indian Government has been. One of the ridiculous parts of the Aden business is that the Turks can't get away! There is nowhere for them to go to, except the hills! They can never be reinforced, and if they were to try and retreat the Arabs would probably make it very hot for them. With all this in our favour the Government won't try to do anything. It could so easily and quickly be done. The General and the political officer there are wondering what is going to happen when the real hot weather comes, and so am I. Aden is an extraordinary place—a volcanic upheaval in the middle of a vast sandy plain, a desolate rock the heat of which in summer is awful. It has for its size an enormous trade caused by its being a coaling station. A mixture of natives, Arabs from the hinterland, and Somalis from the opposite African coast. We are a curious race. How well we begin, and how badly we muddle on. I can't imagine any other nation making of Aden what we have made, and certainly I can't imagine any other nation doing what we are doing there now.

At Aden I put my last finishing touch to the reorganization of the Red Sea Patrol, and I also called together a conference at which I arranged to get the political officers from Aden and Egypt together, and we thrashed out many questions and dissolved many misconceptions which had arisen simply because these people never had a chance of meeting before. So I think I have done some good. . . .

Monday, April 3. At sea. . . . I have just had a wireless message from Aden to say that the effect of the bomb attack on the enemy has been most satisfactory. It has caused consternation, and it is hoped that the Arabs will desert entirely. I believe that the General will take full advantage of it, in spite of India. . . .

April 4. We arrived at Muscat this afternoon, and in its way I have seldom seen anything prettier than the place looked from the sea. The whole country is of black, forbidding rock rising up in strange-shaped peaks, many of which are crowned with the remains of old Portuguese forts. Straggling about on them lies the town, which by contrast looks a pure white. The colouring towards sunset was very beautiful. . . . There are all sorts of little local rows and tribal wars going on in this part of the world, but that is in the normal state of affairs and I don't think directly due to the war, though I have no doubt but that German agents do do harm. But the Arab is always ready to fight anybody as long as there is a chance of loot at the end of it.

April 5. . . . This morning I went to call on the Sultan, a visit of the most ordinary matter, I suppose, for men accustomed to the East, but to me full of interest. The Resident and I marched through the narrow little streets of the town followed by my Staff and preceded by two natives, gorgeous in scarlet robes and gold lace. The inhabitants all came out of their houses to watch the sight, and a fine dignified lot of people they are. I was received by a guard very smartly turned out in khaki and a band which played "God Save the King." The Sultan met me at the door with much dignity and conducted me upstairs to a long veranda overlooking the harbour and lined with chairs, where he sat himself down on the throne (!) and me in an arm-chair on his right—on my right and stretching a long way down the veranda was a row of his near relations,

brothers, uncles, sons, all dressed alike in black robes trimmed with gold lace with white burnouses. One of the nephews, a merry-looking scoundrel who had been educated at Harrow, acted the part of interpreter, and through him the Sultan and I paid each other fulsome compliments and roundly abused the enemy, it being my business to assert that the Germans could never be possibly anything than the enemy of Islam and his to assure me that nobody knew that better than he; the real truth of course being that he considers his revenue more sure from his being on our side than on the other. The *Euryalus* in the distance with her four funnels also I think made an impression on his "desert" mind. An hour afterwards he, accompanied by all his relations, returned my call at the Residency—the *Euryalus* was coaling—where the Resident received him at the door and I only at the top of the stairs. Thank God I still have a certain amount of sense of humour left, so that all these ceremonies, which couldn't have been conducted with more fuss and etiquette had it been the Court of Russia instead of the native Sheik of a tiny barren piece of barren Arabia, amused and interested me. We regaled ourselves with sherbet, beastly from its extreme sweetness, and Arab coffee, equally beastly from its extreme bitterness, and then, as a special token of amity and good will, poured some nasty and common scent on each other's pocket-handkerchiefs. The natural dignity of the Arab saved the whole thing from being ridiculous. The Persian Gulf is a very remarkable place. Even the few hours I have been in it have been enough to show me how impossible are those Arabs in the matter of faith. They are natural born marauders and the highway-men of civilization. Even now I have no less than three ships engaged in sitting upon tribes who are supposed to be friendly. I believe it is the greatest mistake to think of them as possible allies or enemies. They are all sitting on the fence ready to play the vulture on him who comes out the worse—not from a political or national or even tribal point of view but purely from a hope of loot. Of course a certain amount of this action is governed by German propaganda, i.e. German gold. But to take them seriously as a political entity is ridiculous.

CHAPTER X

MESOPOTAMIA AND INDIA

EVER since Wemyss had steamed away from Aden, eastward bound, his thoughts occupied for so many months with the Mediterranean and its submarine warfare, by Egypt, the Canal and the Red Sea, now turned towards Mesopotamia, where the drama being enacted before Kut was already showing signs of turning into a tragedy.

As he wrote:

*Owing to its situation on the flank of Indian lines of communication with the West, the Persian Gulf possesses a strategic value for England which must ever cause its retention in her sphere of influence. Already the construction of the Bagdad railway under German auspices constituted a menace, which on the outbreak of war it became essential to meet. In this imperious necessity is to be found the genesis of the ill-fated campaign in Mesopotamia. Initiated with a just appreciation of strategic requirements, it was unfortunately allowed to develop beyond the limit of its original scope by illusory visions of unessential conquest and was conducted with a lack of foresight that resulted in so much unnecessary sacrifice and suffering.

The control of the Gulf could only be assured by the possession of Basra, the town on the Shatt Arab that is the port of the Gulf. The defence of Basra required the occupation of Nasiriyeh and Amara, situated respectively on the Euphrates and Tigris, and the comparative ease with which these two places fell into our hands in July 1915 permitted of a further improvement of our position by the seizure of Kut, which after considerable resistance was captured by General Townshend on September 29th 1915, when the beaten and demoralized enemy precipitately retreated to Bagdad.

Not content with this success, which assured the original object of the expedition, the lure of Bagdad, seemingly ready to fall into our hands as easily as had the others, proved to be too great to be resisted. Discretion was abandoned, and

* *Memoirs.*

General Townshend, in spite of his protest against the step, which he considered rash and unlikely of resulting in success, was ordered to follow up the retreating enemy. With an insufficiently organized transport service on a tortuous river as the only line of communication with the base, every mile of his advance served but to weaken his force, and when he arrived at Ctesiphon some 25 miles from Bagdad on November 12th it was to meet a reinforced and superior enemy at whose hands he sustained defeat. Followed by the victorious Turks he was obliged to fall back precipitately on Kut, which he reached on December 3rd, and was immediately surrounded and cut off. The enemy proceeded to construct formidable lines below Kut of a depth of some 30 miles, to carry which required a far stronger force than that of the army engaged. Two unsuccessful attempts had been made to relieve the beleaguered forces, one by Sir Percy Lake in January, another by General Aylmer in March, and now General Gorringe, on whom the command had devolved, was once more attempting what his predecessors had failed to accomplish.

On April 6th a telegram was received on board *Euryalus* while at sea reporting General Gorringe's successful offensive, which greatly cheered them, all the more as they had feared to hear at any moment that Kut had fallen, for April 12th was the date that General Townshend had given as being the very latest to which he could hold out. Ignorant as they were of the true state of affairs, it seemed as though this preliminary success could only be the herald of ultimate victory, and they were correspondingly disappointed when they arrived at Bushire to learn that the advance had been checked.

Here Wemyss and his staff, which included Colonel Aubrey Herbert, his liaison officer with the army, transferred to the *Imogene*, the former Constantinople Stationnaire, which was to take them to Basra.

Before hurrying to the front, Wemyss informed himself of the state of the river transport and found that the Royal Indian

Marine who had to deal with it were quite inadequate, whilst their demands in the matter of steamers, etc., appeared to be entirely ignored. They had asked for iron barges from India and were given wooden ones, which were not strong enough to withstand the constant bumping against the bank. When one type of craft was required, they were told they must have another, and so forth. This alone sufficed to account for some of the appalling difficulties with which the troops found themselves confronted.

The *Imogene* not being able to get farther up the Tigris than Kurna, said to be the site of the Garden of Eden, another change had to be made on to the gunboat H.M.S. *Snakefly*, one of the river flotilla under the command of Captain W. Nunn, which took them up to the front.

*As the *Snakefly*, making but slow progress against the rapid stream, emerged from the forest of palm trees with which the banks of the lower reaches of the Tigris are clothed, there was opened out a vast brown plain unbroken by hill or mound, tree or shrub, stretching away as far as the eye could see and conveying to the onlooker a sense of melancholy desolation that no description can adequately portray. The river, wriggling its way through this barren waste, possesses none of the features generally characteristic of running water; its banks of uniform height are productive of nothing green and the muddy waters, harmonizing with the prevailing brownness, give no relief to the monotony of the view. So tortuous are its windings that a vessel making its way in one direction will in a short time have steered a course from every point of the compass, whilst the sharpness of its bends renders navigation a matter of considerable difficulty. At this time, however, the generally prevailing solitude of the scene was broken by the passage of tugs and lighters loaded with stores for the Army before Kut.

He was amazed at the conditions of the water transport, which were gradually revealed as they progressed. The R.I.M. officers, doing their utmost with insufficient craft,

poured their troubles into his sympathetic ear. Small paddle-boats crawled slowly up the stream crowded with troops, and the same type of craft came downstream full of wounded lying on the decks with little protection against rain or sun, the latter being very strong even in April.

*It took us two days to reach Sir Percy Lake's headquarters at Wadi, seven hours of which were spent alongside the banks of the river, against which we ran in a terrific thunderstorm at 11 p.m. the first night. It was a weird situation. Torrential rain obscured all surrounding objects; occasional shouts from the banks indicated the presence of some human beings at no great distance, but whether they emanated from Arabs on the lookout for loot, or patrols of our own troops, it was not possible to ascertain until with the first gleam of dawn the weather cleared and revealed the fact that our neighbours for the night were a post of Indian troops.

He arrived on April 11th at the C.-in-C., Sir Percy Lake's, headquarters, where depression prevailed. General Lake seemed to regard the fall of Kut as inevitable, while General Gorringe, whom Wemyss went to see afterwards, was still cheerful and optimistic; he said he had found the Turks' weak place and was going to attack it. General Webb Gilman, who was there on a roving commission to report to the War Office, was, on the other hand, frankly pessimistic. The state of affairs was awful, he said; lack of the most elementary necessities for the campaign, which, according to him, India had starved. No balloons, no transport. A story was current that some of the home mails had been burnt in order that the state of affairs might be hushed up.

†The transport was in the hands of the Royal Indian Marine, a service that had ever proved itself efficient in its own somewhat limited sphere of action, but it possessed neither the experience nor the power of expansion necessary for dealing successfully with an undertaking such as that now in their hands.

* *Memoirs.*

† *Ibid.*

The R.I. Marine is not like the Royal Navy, a service administered by a body of experts, but is an adjunct of the Indian Army and as such subject to the Indian Army Council, a body necessarily devoid of any maritime technical knowledge. Its director, at that time a naval officer, is merely the head of a department without that authority which alone could have given scope to his technical knowledge. With his headquarters at Bombay he was at too great a distance from the Army Council at Simla or Delhi to allow of constant personal communication, a circumstance naturally enough resulting in delay and misunderstandings that were not confined to Bombay but reverberated as far as Basra. So it happened that there was no clear understanding of the requirements on the river and no authority at Simla possessing the knowledge enabling them to judge of the soundness of their demands.

The men on the spot asked for a different kind of lighter to those that had been sent them, which had proved not strong enough, but their demands had been ignored. They then suggested that the firm of Messrs. Lynch, who had experience of the river navigation, should be consulted, and were told that their advice was being acted upon, but when the latter's representative at Basra communicated with their office in London they were told that no advice had been asked.

This lack of cohesion, together with total absence of any method of using the available craft, produced an irregularity of supplies from which the troops at the front suffered. Shortness of stores, of provisions, of all necessities hampered the already tired Generals in their operations.

I discussed the matter in all its details with Sir P. Lake, and told him in my opinion the transport should be in the hands of the Navy, who with their experience gained in the present war and with their greater power of production would be far better able to deal with it. I offered to ask the Admiralty, as a first step, to send out an Admiral to undertake the duties of Principal Transport Officer under which the personnel of the R.I.M. should be placed.

The General, however, was averse to an arrangement which he believed would deprive the army of authority over the transportation, and although I pointed out how successfully such an organization had worked at Gallipoli, where

60 miles of sea separated the fighting-lines from the base and where the Army requirements had ever been met, he distrusted the idea of divorce between the military authorities and their transport and held to his ideas. I could do nothing beyond pressing my advice, but since he refused to consider it, I felt that any further official step on my part would lead to friction. But though I refrained from official action, I informed the Admiralty of my views and told the General that I had done so.

The whole solution of the problem was a railway, but the Indian Government had hitherto turned a deaf ear to the demand for one. They appeared incapable of realizing that the campaign had assumed a character for which the original provision was wholly inadequate and from which they could now only extricate themselves without disaster by efforts far greater than those which they had hitherto put forth and expenditure of treasure that they were unwilling to undertake.

But whether in great matters or small the authorities in India seemed ever bent in thwarting the efforts of those on the spot.

Townshend had telegraphed to India to ask if he might tell his troops that when they were released they would all be given leave; the answer was in the negative. He now wired that the Indians were dying of starvation. The troops had been on half rations for some time. Free communication was still being held between him and the C.-in-C. by wireless, and Wemyss was not a little surprised to receive a message from him *en clair* welcoming him as an old acquaintance whom he hoped soon to meet.

*Townshend had originally estimated that he could hold out no later than the end of January. Troops had then been rushed up and an attack launched on the 21st January without due preparation. It failed. He then gave April 12th as the latest date to which he could eke out his provisions, and it was in view of this eventuality that the attack had been made on April 5th, in spite of the adverse circumstance caused by the heavy rains. And now by cutting down his

rations to starvation proportions he hoped to be able to prolong the time of his resistance till April 28th.

Taking advantage of this respite General Gorringe, who had not given up all hope, believing that he had found the enemy's weak spot, resolved to attack once more, but his chances of success would be greatly augmented could he have another ten days of preparation.

Thus the possibility of revictualling Kut had already been broached before my arrival, and the question that I found awaiting my decision was, Would the Navy attempt to run the blockade and furnish the starving garrison with the means of prolonging their resistance?

It was a forlorn hope. The conditions were all unfavourable. No available vessel could make more than 6 knots against the strong current, and she would have to run the gauntlet of several well-placed and well-served batteries; darkness and rain that might facilitate her passage past these formidable defences would only render the already difficult navigation more so, and it was almost certain that a heavy chain had been laid across the river to foil just such an attempt. The chances, in fact, of success were so infinitesimal as to preclude the attempt being made, unless some assurance was forthcoming that its success would help to save Townshend and not merely prolong the agony. General Gorringe's appreciation furnished me with that assurance, and under the circumstances I felt I could not withhold my consent, however little hope I had in its achievement.

The question settled, preparations were immediately put in hand, though any chance of keeping them a secret was small. The treacherous natives, taking every advantage of their so-called neutrality, were ever ready to help either belligerent so long as profit was forthcoming. To keep the preparations from their knowledge was impossible, and to the already mentioned adverse circumstances was added the practical certainty that the enemy would be kept fully informed of our plans.

One of Messrs. Lynch's river steamers was chosen as the least unsuitable, and she was fitted up at Amara for the purpose. Volunteers to man her were called for from the flotilla, and every officer and man volunteered, including Aubrey Herbert and Captain Cowley in Messrs. Lynch's service.

I was loth to let any civilian take part in an expedition from which it was improbable he would return, and Herbert's request met with an emphatic refusal. With Cowley, however, the matter was different. He had the reputation of being the ablest pilot on the river, and his intimate acquaintance with its intricacies was an asset that might well turn the overweighted balance in our favour. So he, gallant fellow, formed one of the crew. The remainder consisted of Lieut. Humphrey O. B. Firman, R.N., in command, and Engr. Sub-Lieut. Louis Reed, R.N.R., and twelve ratings from the river gunboats.

The difficulty had not lain in getting a crew but in selecting one. They were under no misapprehension as to the desperate nature of the undertaking. I personally told them all that I considered the chance of success as one in a hundred, but the gallant fellows were all sure that that one chance would be theirs.

April 15. H.M.S. "Mantis." . . . I am living on board a gunboat tied up to the banks of the Tigris some 24 miles by river from our goal—Kut. What the end will be it is impossible to say, but the end—one way or another—will come within the next few days. A wonderful sight is the river. Large native boats, some seventy or eighty of them full of stores of all description, are moored to the banks on both sides, whilst ashore, just opposite where we lie, are troops bivouacked and ready to move at a moment's notice. Our worst enemy, far, far worse than the Turk, is the weather and the country. The former is atrocious, rain and heavy thunderstorms, and the latter equally so. As flat as a pancake for miles and miles; it is all alluvial and not a rock or stone anywhere. You can imagine, then, better than I can describe, the state of the ground after heavy rain. It is almost impossible to move either guns or troops, and every hour is of vital importance. As with the Gallipoli campaign so with this one. One could write reams as to the mistakes, blunders and want of foresight displayed. We never seem to learn from our bitter experiences and we appear to have tumbled into our troubles here much as we did at Gallipoli. . . . Up here the fighting is pretty regular, and all day long, and most of the night, guns and rolls of musketry make

themselves heard. It is slow work, but although we know our own difficulties we do not know the enemy's, and they cannot be slight. Of one thing I feel assured, and that is that want of success will not be due to the men now on the spot. There have been many Generals, and I suppose all or most of them have made mistakes, but the initial fault lies with the Indian Government. With the latter, even in my short time out here, I have had enough dealings to see that they are impossible. . . .

Life here is very simple and very primitive, as you may imagine. I am what is called "flying light" and have brought with me nothing beyond absolute necessities. As a matter of fact I think I have rather overdone it because I expected to be back on board *Imogene* earlier. . . . The country here is full of game, and sometimes of an evening some of the Staff go out with guns. It is curious shooting partridges almost in the camp and within sound of the guns. The birds are a very agreeable addition to the menu, which otherwise consists of bully beef, eggs and bacon, with an occasional curry whose contents one does not inquire into too closely.

April 16. The weather has turned fine, and this should help us. It is a race against time and almost a question of hours, so you can imagine how one watches the weather. I am not impressed with the soldiers here, with the exception of General Goringe, who is a fine man and a fine soldier. . . . Poor Townshend and his men! For four months and more have they been shut up in that place, and I can well imagine what their feelings must be. However, their fate will be settled one way or another very soon. Bagdad under the most favourable circumstances I don't think we shall try to go to now, whatever may happen after the hot season. . . . How proud I am of the naval officers! To see these boys doing the running of their ships so well—so cheery and so pleased with themselves and their men—is a true pleasure. They have strenuous times and their whole heart and soul is in their business. I think they are all very pleased to see me out here, for they have been very much neglected, and I hope there are many things I shall be able to put on a better basis for them. . . .

April 19. Things are looking more favourable. Townshend

now has food till the 24th or 25th, owing to our having sent him some by aeroplane. Moreover, within the last two days we have had a very decided success, and I really can hope that we may be in time after all? . . .

April 20. Kurna. Here I am at this moment actually alongside the banks of the Tigris in what is always supposed to be the site of the Garden of Eden. If I have time I shall go for a stroll this evening before dinner and read the Book of Genesis. Travelling is the only true way of learning geography intelligently. If a few months ago anybody had asked me to describe the position of Bagdad, or how the Euphrates or Tigris ran, or where the boundaries between Turkey and Persia were, I could not have told him. Now it has been visualized I seem to know it as well as West Wemyss or the Croix des Gardes! Dear Croix des Gardes! When will you and I take some of those heavenly walks there? . . .

April 22. I have returned to the front from Kurna to find that matters have not progressed as one had hoped. Townshend still hangs on and manages to prolong his last date by the help of food which is sent in to him by aeroplane. There has been some heavy fighting and many casualties on both sides during the last two days. The country is awful and the difficulties are great. . . .

* This attack was the last effort on the part of an exhausted force to relieve Kut. Two lines of trenches were captured, but, full of water, it was found impossible to retain them and our men were eventually driven back to their own positions with their rifles choked with mud.

With this failure vanished all possibility of saving Kut before the 28th, and the hope of averting the coming disaster now lay in the *Fulnar*. How slender were her chances of success has already been related, but hope dies hard, and deep in the depth of each man's heart lay a germ of expectation that at the eleventh hour would the impossible after all be accomplished. Such was the spirit animating the crew of the *Fulnar*.

Low in the water owing to the stores of provisions with which she was laden the *Fulnar* started on her fateful journey, amidst deep silence, at 8 o'clock on the evening of Easter Monday (April 24th), and steaming slowly into the gathering

darkness passed out of sight down the bend in the river never to return.

When the time approached when the vessel would be nearing the Turkish batteries a feint attack was made under the cover of a heavy bombardment with the object of diverting the attention of the enemy from the vessel that carried not only relief for the starving garrison but the hopes of thousands of gallant men who through no fault of their own failed in the task that had been set them.

Exactly one year before, almost to the hour, had sailed from Tenedos those troops who by effecting a landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula the following morning had won for themselves immortal fame. There were many present on this occasion who hoped that the date might prove auspicious and a presage of success as deserving in the one case as the other.

Communication with Kut had never been interrupted, and the ominous lack of any message from the besieged town during the night prepared us for the knowledge that the attack had failed. Early the following morning an air reconnaissance reported that the *Fulnar* was aground off the Es Sinn position and that the enemy was busy taking possession of her valuable stores.

According to "Official History of the War," "Naval Operations" (Newbolt, Vol. IV, p. 90): "The Turks knew that the attempt was going to be made, and their outposts on the bank soon reported that a steamer was passing their positions. Rifle-fire was soon opened upon her, but Lieut. Firman held on steadily at 6 knots over the bottom: owing to the strong current he could do no more. At Sannaiyat the rifle-fire became extraordinarily heavy; but the *Fulnar* was taken past it and negotiated round all the bends as far as the Es Sinn position, only 10 miles from Kut. Here she came under artillery-fire for the first time; and it increased steadily as she passed along the reach of the river between Es Sinn trenches and Maqasis. Some moments before she reached the Maqasis bend, a shell struck the bridge. Lieut. Firman fell dead, thinking doubtless that success was in sight, for the *Fulnar* was then within about 8 miles of the town. Lieut.-Commander Cowley, though wounded by the same shell, now took charge. In a few more minutes

the *Julnar* struck a cable which had been stretched across the river at Maqasis, and drifted on to the right bank of the river near the fort. She could not be got off, and Lieut.-Commander Cowley surrendered. The Turks harboured nothing but a desire for vengeance against an officer who had shown such dauntless courage. Some time after they had carried off their prisoners, the Turks separated Lieut.-Commander Cowley from his men, and he was never heard of again; but there are strong grounds to believe that he was shot by his captors in cold blood."

April 25. I'm a sad man to-day, because I have lost three gallant officers and twelve gallant men. I have hopes they are not killed but only prisoners, but I have lost them all the same. It came about this way. On the 22nd our troops had a serious check which made it quite impossible for them to get to Kut before the food gave out finally. The only possible chance lay in revictualling the place, and this could only be done by sending a steamer laden with food to run the gauntlet of the enemy's guns. It was desperate business and a forlorn hope at the best, but I decided that as so much depended upon it, it was a risk that should be taken. I consequently had a steamer protected as far as possible from gun-fire and called for a volunteer crew. I need hardly say that everybody wanted to go and really the difficulty lay in choosing the men. They were perfectly well aware of what they were doing, for I never disguised from them the fact that only by a miracle could they succeed, and that I never could have permitted the project had it not been our last and only chance. Well, they started last night at 8, and we had hoped that they might have got in soon after midnight, but they never arrived, and this morning our air planes reported that the ship was ashore more than three-quarters of her way on her journey. As she hasn't been sunk I have every reason to hope that they are prisoners, and I feel sure that they will be well treated by the Turks, who are gallant and can recognize gallantry in their enemies. I hope I shall be able to get the V.C. for some of them. I saw them all before they started and shook hands with them and thanked them for what they were doing, and they were so nice and cheery and gallant. They took with them a local pilot, before the war the captain of one of the river steamers

that run between Basra and Bagdad. Such a charming man, the very best type of a gallant, middle-class Englishman who couldn't make out that he was doing anything out of the way in volunteering for this business. Peace to them if they are dead, and a speedy release if they are prisoners. To-day is the anniversary of our landing at Gallipoli, and I had hoped that this year the date might be equally favourable and that at the eleventh hour we might have saved Kut by a gallant action, but it was not to be. . . .

I can't help thinking of my poor gallant men; but I wouldn't have it otherwise (except for success) at any price. We took a big risk under justifiable circumstances and the men with a gallant cheeriness and confidence which it does one good to see. Who shall say that the British race is degenerate when acts of heroism and cheerfulness under appalling circumstances are matters of almost daily routine?

*If gallantry, determination and sufferings nobly borne both by the besieged and relieving force had been sufficient to overcome the difficulties with which they had been faced Townshend and his force would have been saved; but a niggardly economy and a failure to realize the situation on the part of the Indian Government had outweighed the heroism displayed at the front, and the sacrifices entailed in the endeavour to relieve Kut were in vain.

Kut was doomed and nothing now remained but to obtain as favourable terms of surrender as possible. It was hoped that Townshend and the garrison might be allowed to return to India on parole, but I could not believe, considering the manner in which the war was being waged, that the victorious Turks would grant any concessions, for we had nothing wherewith to bargain, no *quid pro quo* to offer since Townshend had received explicit orders to destroy his guns. It was with empty hands then that we should enter into negotiations, trusting only that a chivalrous regard on the part of the enemy for a gallant defence would induce him to forego keeping them as prisoners.

In the course of discussing the matter with Sir Percy Lake he told me that he himself was very anxious to conduct the negotiations. My own opinion was that he was the last man who should do so and that the only chance of getting any

favourable terms would be for Townshend himself to negotiate them. It was in my mind, but it was difficult for me to say so, that Townshend at least had the prestige that the gallant conduct of the defence conferred upon him, whilst Lake was the unsuccessful reliever with no prestige at all. Townshend himself wished Lake to carry through the negotiations, but I eventually prevailed upon the General to insist upon it being Townshend. I told him that if he thought it would do any good I would conduct them myself, but he naturally did not like the idea of an Admiral doing so.

April 25. . . . Well, this brings us face to face with the fact that Kut must fall and that Townshend cannot be relieved.

I am not going to say whether the soldiers (the Generals, I mean) have done well or badly, but what I do say is that this expedition has been most scandalously starved, and in my humble opinion the troops have been asked to perform the almost impossible. That they at one moment almost succeeded does not lessen the blame that is attributable to someone high up. The case is too intricate for me to form a true judgment now. I think that if my predecessor could have visited these spheres he might have been able to advise, at any rate, how to improve the transport, which has been very bad. That apparently is the fault of the Indian Government. I am advising great changes, but of course I arrived here much too late to be able to do anything now. It is only next autumn that we shall be able to make any improvement if any action is taken. And now we have before us the miserable task of trying to negotiate with the enemy to get as good terms as possible for poor Townshend. I must say in this case the Admiralty are entirely free from blame. The Indian Government have had the entire running of the campaign and the transport is in their hands, but it should not be. . . . Good Heavens, how this station has been neglected!

April 28. I am on my way down the river to Kurna, there being nothing left for me to do at the front. Townshend's supply of food comes to an end to-morrow, and he is trying to negotiate with the Turkish General to allow his poor garrison to come out and return to India on parole. As a

matter of sentiment I think the Turks might do it, for he has made a gallant defence. As a matter of fact there is no reason to expect anything but unconditional surrender. . . . As usual there are several factors that have helped to bring about this unhappy ending. Lack of appreciation of the state of affairs prevailing out here in India and at home; light-heartedly going into a campaign without foreseeing possible results; insufficiency of transport out here and also Townshend's always giving wrong dates as the limit of his endurance. His perpetually giving earlier dates than the true ones has led the Generals here to do things in too much of a hurry against their better judgment. I feel pretty confident that had Townshend six weeks ago said that he could have held out for all this time, the relief could have been effected, as the Generals would have had time to go to work in a more certain and slower manner. Oh, the pity of it all! . . . To-morrow I am starting for a four days' trip up the Euphrates, to visit the gunboats in that river and to get a general idea of the situation. . . . The weather is warming up and the flies are intolerable, but they won't be so bad down the river I hope and believe.

"But the flies! they are absolutely in sheets and curtains," swallowed with the food and breathed in with the air, was what he minded most—for, according to his Staff (Captain Bevan) he quite cheerfully disregarded the discomforts of life in a diminutive gunboat—the bad cooking became a joke, the lack of accommodation a disadvantage, but nothing more. He lived on one gunboat or another, sometimes the *Mantis*, sometimes the *Snakefly*, taking his meals where they could be more easily obtained.

He had felt the loss of the *Julnar* deeply; the surrender of Kut had grieved and disappointed him, but never did he allow himself to appear otherwise than good-humoured and cheerful. He was everywhere encouraging and talking. In spite of his recent arrival and lack of exact acquaintance with the operations and trials of the preceding months, his advice was always asked for and appreciated.

He was much touched by the devotion of his staff.

April 28. . . . You can't think what a blessing to me are my Staff. These sort of excursions where one is naturally very much cramped and one has a good deal of (comparative) roughing would be horrid if one didn't have nice men with one, nice men, moreover, who are thoroughly efficient!

I came across an East Wemyss man in one of the gun-boats, and eight days ago there was a piper of the Seaforth Highlanders playing the pipes on the river-bank just abreast of the ship! I got into conversation with him and found he came from Kirkcaldy! Such meetings in such surroundings are extremely pleasant, and I think each one comes away feeling a little bit kindlier and a little more sympathetic.

I cannot tell you how much I admire the "Tommy." He is indeed a splendid creature, a veritable Sam Weller—no amount of misery and hardship seems to put him out of temper, he always makes the best of things, and when he does grumble his laments are about the most trivial matters! Of course some regiments are better than others, and there is no doubt but that those with traditions are generally the best. The Black Watch have been literally decimated more than once, and yet they never hesitate to respond nobly to any call that may be made on them for the most hazardous attacks. The Indian troops are not bad, but (luckily for us) they have been proved over and over again to be inferior to white troops—and I am sure they know it. Properly trained officers is of course what we lack most. The want of them is severely felt everywhere.

Basra. May 4. I have had my trip up the Euphrates and returned here this morning. The Euphrates is quite different from the Tigris and much less disagreeable. Many more trees and much more cultivation, in fact the natives seem much less uncivilized than those of the Tigris, but I think are quite as unreliable and treacherous. After all, they hate the Turks and the British about equally, and so naturally they want to tumble off the fence on the right side—like many other more worthy persons! This is the flood season, and many of the villages are inundated, but that seems to have but little effect on the inhabitants, who apparently live as happily up to their stomachs in water as dry! I was

thrilled at passing the ruins of Ur of the Chaldees, one of the few places I look upon as absolutely reliable in early Bible history—no wonder Abraham wished to emigrate. The place I went to was Nasaryieh, which is held by us, and very well indeed was it administered. The bazaars were a model of cleanliness and so were the streets, and they had managed actually to exterminate the house-fly—a perfect miracle considering how they abound all round here. I stopped at a couple of villages just to have a look at them, but really there is nothing to see. Savages living in sort of amphibious wigwams. The houses are nearly in every case made of nothing but reeds and matting.

The Arabs inhabiting the marshlands carried on a constant guerrilla warfare against both sides and preyed on the battle-fields, murdering alike Turk, Indian and English, which so enraged the Turks that it was said that they had desired a truce during which the Arabs might be exterminated and the fight then resumed.

Wemyss was rejoined on May 13th by Col. Aubrey Herbert, who had been away on a mission to Khalil Pasha, the Turkish General, to arrange the terms of the surrender of Kut. A more suitable envoy could hardly have been found, for, possessed of the most varied qualities rarely combined in the same person, he added to a wide knowledge of mankind in general, and Turks and Easterners in particular, a large-hearted sympathy extended to all those who were down and out. He had a better and wider appreciation of the general complications in the Near East arising from the war than most, and had already done much good in Egypt by bringing naval, military, and political points of view in contact with each other. Wemyss had expected that he would do the same in Mesopotamia, an expectation destined to be fully realized.

His mission on this occasion, however, was not as successful as had been hoped. He related how he, Colonel Beach, and Captain T. E. Lawrence, of whom it was composed, had been well treated, but were obliged to be blindfolded. They

had slept that night at the Turkish camp, where they gave them their own beds and tents and an excellent dinner. Khalil, a nephew of Enver Pasha, he described as a civil man of thirty-five, with square chin and a mouth like a steel trap. He was very angry at the guns at Kut having been destroyed; had this not been done, Townshend would probably have been set free, for the enemy had a great admiration for him. As it was, they only obtained minor concessions: the evacuation of sick and wounded, the exchange of prisoners, the sending up of drugs and such like.

Herbert's return led to lengthy confabulations as to the best means of putting an end to a situation which inspired him and Wemyss with equal horror; they had both been to the front, they had both viewed with dismay the misery inflicted on our troops, the sufferings of the sick and wounded, writhing in agony without proper medical care; they were both filled with the same righteous indignation against the authors of all this distress. Herbert sent off a telegram to the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, telling him he had been at the front and that unless some action were immediately taken the consequences would be disastrous; that everybody realized that the economy of the Indian Government was responsible for this state of affairs, and enumerating the many necessities of which they were short. Before they sailed, however, he was informed that his telegram had been sent to India for censorship. Convinced that the Indian authorities would do everything to prevent the truth from being known, it was decided that Herbert on reaching Bombay should, without landing, be smuggled on board the first steamer leaving for England. This was done, and the result was the debate on Mesopotamia in the House of Commons and the setting up of the Commission and the well-known report.

Wemyss had first thought of sending a similar telegram to

the First Lord, Mr. Balfour, but on second thoughts he decided on a bolder step. On arrival at Bombay he would go straight up to Simla and lay the case before the Viceroy and the C.-in-C., all the more as he had been begged to do so by the military Commander at Basra.

Before leaving for Bombay, "the root of all the evil here," he had to busy himself with various reorganizations at Basra and to visit several outlying places in the Persian Gulf.

May 16. *H.M.S. "Euryalus."* . . . I have been visiting some of the Sheiks and I am glad to find that my prognostications are correct, and that the fall of Kut has not had the bad effect amongst the Arabs that some people feared. They all looked upon it as inevitable, and as merely a rather insignificant incident in the war. Whether the same ideas prevail in India and Afghanistan I do not know.

Splendid old fellows are some of these Sheiks, full of dignity and (in most cases) money, if of little else. They put on all their most magnificent clothes when they come to see me and very beautiful they are. Robes of gorgeous silks, beautiful Indian shawls round their heads, and swords and daggers incrusting with rough jewels and covered with gold. Dates and pearls are their chief sources of revenue, and I am told that some of them have incomes of between £100,000 and £200,000. With this of course they have to keep their towns and troops, but since the latter are unpaid (compulsory service!) and since the former have as yet neither drains nor town halls, and since there are no paid members of Parliament voting themselves large salaries, I conclude that most of this money goes into their own pockets. What they do with it nobody seems quite to know. One of them has a motor-car, but that hardly seems an extravagance for a man with that income. I was unable to see any of the actual pearl-fishing going on. I was pressed for time and the fishing fleet operating some way off. What an interesting country it all is. Never can we let it fall into the hands of Russia. The Gulf is *the* strategic point of the Indian Empire and will be so more than ever. I stayed a couple of days at Bushire, where we have troops policing the country. The surrounding tribes under the aegis of an extremely clever German,

ex-German Consul at Bushire, are very anti-British. The German, by name Wassmuss, goes about disguised as an Arab, and I am told he cannot be identified as a European except for his blue eyes; but as there is an Arab tribe not far off distinguished by the fact that they all have blue eyes, it makes the matter of getting hold of this gentleman one of extreme difficulty. Bushire in the summer must be awfully hot—even now it is not exactly cool. . . .

He was now on his way to Bombay.

I am on rather delicate ground because I am going to Simla and propose to lay before the Viceroy and the C.-in.-C. of the Indian Army the view of the situation I have gleaned from my visit to the front. The Army Commander at Basra implored me to go. Such an extraordinary attitude for a General to take to an Admiral! But I am very glad of it because it makes my standing somewhat stronger. Talk of Calais being found engraved on Queen Mary's heart! "Too late" will be branded on the hearts of half the Englishmen of this generation with bars of fire. God knows whether I shall be able to do any good. Anyhow, I shall try and keep hopeful.

May 20. We arrive at Bombay to-morrow early. . . . My visit to Simla should be interesting and I am looking forward to it, but not to the journey up there, which takes 40 hours and is, I understand, awfully hot at this time of the year. . . . The advance of the Russians towards Bagdad seems very uncertain, but at present it looks to me as though we could not possibly get there before them under any circumstances. India is, I think, entirely responsible for this, and the manner in which they have conducted affairs in Mesopotamia is absolutely criminal. Indian finances are in the hands of one Sir William Meyer!!! who, so far as I can make out, has prevented anybody from putting their hands into the purse, and actually boasts of having saved £200,000 in this year's budget, and the troops in Mesopotamia starved of the most elementary necessities.*

Viceregal Lodge, Simla. May 25. I arrived in Bombay on the 22nd and came straight up here, as I wanted so much to

* Lord Hardinge's responsibility was dealt with in the Mesopotamia Commission's Report.

see the Viceroy and the military C.-in-C. and talk to them on the subject of Mesopotamia. Leaving Bombay at 5 p.m. on the 22nd, and we didn't get here till 1 p.m. on the 24th; a long and hot (*how* hot!) 44 hours. I can't tell you what the heat was like—118 in the shade! and you can imagine (or rather you can't) what that was in a railway carriage. We—Marriott, Neville and I—started with a large store of ice and fruit, but nothing was of any use. The electric fans only made matters worse, they made the air hotter instead of cooler. Luckily it was a dry and not a damp heat, and it was so intense that one didn't sweat—one sizzled instead. I had a carriage to myself and so I entirely stripped and lay panting on the hot, hot seat most of the time, but nothing seemed to matter, and I don't think I should have been any hotter had I had on a large quantity of thick clothing. The last four hours of our journey were performed in a motor-car when we climbed the gorgeous Himalayas on the ordinary railway line, a most delightful mode of progression, as we had no dust; as we climbed so it grew cooler and cooler, perfectly delightful, and I really think it was well worth undergoing those hours of heat for the delight of that drive. And here I am 7,000 feet above the level of the sea surrounded by absolutely gorgeous scenery. The actual Simla is a conglomeration of houses and bungalows scattered over a large area which contains many ridges and hills and as a consequence the distances are very great. The Viceregal Lodge is situated on the summit of a peak the whole of which is in the grounds, so that it is quite private and certainly cut off from everything else. The gardens are really beautiful—many terraces and magnificent views in whichever direction one turns. The Viceregal Lodge very comfortable, and just misses being very fine indeed. Hundreds (literally) of native servants in red and gold liveries. They pop up at the most unexpected moments and in the most unexpected places. Apparently there is one permanently stationed at my door, who pops up from vague space whenever I appear and opens the door for me with many profound salaams. Every landing and every corner seems to contain them, and Lady Chelmsford told me that she was only just getting over the impression of thinking that there was always one under her chair.

He was the first officer of Flag or General Officer's rank who had ever penetrated to Simla from the front, and his advent caused no little sensation, while on his coming, as he did, straight from Mesopotamia and all its horrors, the impression produced by a place for which, wrapped in a feeling of security, the war seemingly did not exist, was one of mingled exasperation and relief—exasperation at the apparent callousness, relief from the ever-present nightmare.

The Viceroy and Lady Chelmsford were more than civil, kind and hospitable, and it was not long before Wemyss unfolded to the former the tale of the Mesopotamian campaign in all its ghastly detail.

I have had some long talks with him (the Viceroy) and he seems very clear-headed and I should think morally courageous. The military C.-in-C. (Sir Beauchamp Duff) I have also seen, and there are many matters in which we can mutually help each other, and I am extremely glad I came here, for my visit has, I think, done good.

From that month onwards the Mesopotamian campaign was to be managed on an entirely different scale, and ultimately with success.

My visit here has created quite an excitement, as never before has Simla beheld an Admiral! Yesterday I spent going about in a victoria with gorgeous natives in red and gold liveries clinging on to different parts of the carriage. Bands received me everywhere, and altogether I began to think I was somewhat of a swell. Everything seems to be very well done. Servants, horses and carriages all very well turned out—many A.D.C.s awaiting one's orders to see if they can do anything for one.

After another appallingly hot journey he was back at Bombay on May 28th, able at last after all these hectic weeks to enjoy a short spell of comparative rest and relaxation with nothing more exciting than routine work. He settled down at Admiralty House, of which he wrote rapturous

descriptions to his wife, looking forward to the time when, as he hoped, they might be living there together.

I am beginning to be rather fascinated by Bombay. It is a wonderful sight to drive through the town. This part of it is magnificent. Splendid broad boulevards with magnificent trees which just now are gorgeous masses of colour. Motor-cars, buggies, victorias and every sort and kind of conveyance with Europeans, Parsees, Hindus, and all sorts and conditions of men and women in them. And then the native streets, teeming with natives all seemingly extremely busy doing nothing. It's a very wonderful sight. At present Bombay is very empty except for such soldiers and officials as are obliged to be here for their work. The weather is disagreeable because of the dampness, not because of the high temperature. It is absolutely the worst time of the year to be here, and people are fools enough to ask me why I came here now. As if anything but circumstances and the enemy could govern one's movements! It shows the attitude of the mind of India and how little the war really affects them.

He visited the hospitals.

I saw three men (soldiers) from the Kut garrison. One, poor chap, dying of starvation, another getting quite well after having been wounded *and* having rheumatic fever, and the third recovering in body, but his mind gradually going, and the doctor tells me that he will probably be a total idiot in a very short time. Isn't it dreadful! . . . Alas! I have had confirmation of the rumour which I heard some little time ago that two of the officers of the *Julnar* were killed and five men wounded. Real bad luck, for I had hoped that at least they might have got off with their lives. Poor fellows! they died gallantly and not uselessly after all, and their example was a fine one, though they did not succeed in their task.

He was very much disturbed just then at the news of the Battle of Jutland, of which he heard the first and worst account from the military Commander. Although dim rumours had been flying about, smatterings of wireless press telegrams, their reception in those days was difficult and the censorship did not allow any official news to be published

in India until about a week after the battle, when the Bombay Yacht Club was flooded with telegrams leaving everyone, including Wemyss and his Staff, who had heard nothing official from the Admiralty, bewildered at their varying contents.

June 7. . . . And they have had a fight in the North Sea at last! We have paid a pretty heavy price, but we appear to have driven the enemy back very successfully, too successfully I fear, for it looks to me as though they escaped quicker than they should. It is impossible with such scanty information as one has to form anything like a true estimation of what has happened or of what the results were likely to be. Poor Hood and Arbuthnot! Both good fellows and gallant officers and good admirals, their loss is great. Arbuthnot was in the same lot as I in the *Britannia*. The loss of the *Defence*, *Black Prince* and *Warrior* to me is quite understandable; I always hated their being in the North Sea—quite unsuitable. It is the loss of their gallant officers and men that matters, not the ships. They were of a bad type and quite outclassed. The *Queen Mary's* sinking so quickly I cannot account for. I think there must be something abnormal, though of course the effect of 15-in. shells is appalling. If the enemy were out to try and raise the blockade, then indeed it is a great success, for we certainly have not only prevented that now but have put an end to any hopes they may have had in that direction for some considerable time to come. If, on the contrary, they were only out for a raid or a little trial of strength, hoping only to meet an inferior force, the moral effect on them will not be so great, though it will teach them a lesson. We shall see.

He was re-embarking on that day to sail for Colombo, when before leaving a telegram reached him giving us the news of the loss of the *Hampshire* and of Kitchener and his Staff. How dreadful! What a terrible end for him, poor man! Actually to lose his life by drowning, the very dramaticness of it is awful. I wonder what the effect of it will be? I hope to heavens that it won't put the people of England into a panic. There is no reason why it should.

A few days later (June 12th) he wrote:

I can think of little else than poor Kitchener, and wonder how on earth it happened and what the effect of his death will be, either direct or indirect. I am inclined to think that his good work was finished and that materially his loss will not now be very great. He lived to see compulsion, and I expect that his name had a great deal to do with that measure being so comparatively easily passed, and I doubt whether his personality would in the future have achieved any useful results. Poor man! What I suspect is almost a greater loss is poor O'Beirne—I gather that he had been extraordinarily successful and that they will find it difficult to replace him. Another friend gone. Mercifully one hasn't the time to ponder over one's personal losses. I am afraid that there will be many people who will realize more than they do now how much they have suffered. . . .

Bad news, as always, had not come singly, for even before Kitchener's death and the loss of so many gallant comrades in the North Sea the tidings of the Irish Rebellion had stirred him deeply:

But Ireland! Did you ever read of such an exhibition of cowardice and ineptitude on the part of the Government! Thank God the rebellion has done away with the office of Viceroy, if it has done nothing else. The more one learns of that office the more one sees that it could only be a useless and expensive nest for official ineptitude. God knows what the end will be, but it will at least free the Government from their craven fear of publicity. . . .

And later, on May 31st:

I wonder if the Irish business has been squashed so comparatively easily as they would lead us to suppose. It is a shocking affair and if not properly handled may be the source of dreadful trouble. I can imagine, on the contrary, that if properly dealt with it may be the bursting of the abscess and ease matters considerably. Birrell's excuses are almost pathetic, but how bankrupt must our statesmanship be for such a man to have been in such a position all these years! I suppose that there is no man who has held office during the last twenty or thirty years who isn't in some measure to blame for this catastrophe. . . .

I don't think it was either very wise or very tactful to put Lord Hardinge on to the job of inquiring into the Irish business. The next thing they will do is to put Birrell on to inquire into the state of affairs in India! Of course the fact is that in these days when every crossing-sweeper has a voice in matters it is quite impossible for any Government to RULE. It should be possible for them to administer, but RULE! NO. Whatever anybody does there always will be a number of people who will find fault and disagree, and they about equal in number those who approve. And since they can all make themselves heard, nothing is done to please. A great pity that they are listened to. The Press is horrible, and the Harmsworth lot the worst of all. It's rather heart-breaking to think that people take their opinion from anybody who may be writing.

He had now arrived at Colombo and was staying with the Governor, Sir John Anderson, an old friend or rather acquaintance since *Ophir* days when he was on H.R.H.'s Staff, sent by the Colonial Office where in those days he was a permanent official. . . .

This is a charming house, built so as to catch any breeze there may be. I am installed in an enormous room with windows on three sides, looking out on tropical gardens and the sea. I have always heard that Colombo was supposed to be the blue riband of colonial Governorships, and I can quite imagine it. I believe there is a fine Government House at Kandy and another up in the hills in a God-given climate.

As usual my visit here shows forth many imperfections in the naval organization, and I shall be busy putting matters on a sounder footing while I am here. . . . On the 17th I go East in order to meet the C.-in-C. of the China Station. I pointed out to the Admiralty that there was much overlap between the two stations and told them I meant to go, and they gladly acquiesced. So I hope after five months being in command here (how time flies!) I shall have got everything more or less straight.

Sir John Anderson and his daughter-in-law, who was doing the honours for him, were kind and hospitable people. I had a long conversation with

him last night. He showed plenty of shrewd common sense—in fact quite a good type of the civil service official. . . . He is very much down on the Government of India, and we croaked away on that subject for quite a long time.

Some time previously Wemyss had already come to this opinion of

what a confused mess is the thing they call the Government of India! Red-tape and miles of it, and one is confronted by some absurd difficulty every time one tries to do anything. However, I am breaking through all rules of precedent—and etiquette!—by writing to the Viceroy straight. I arranged that with him before coming away from Simla.

The *Euryalus* sailed for Penang on June 17th.

June 18. H.M.S. "*Euryalus*." At sea. . . . I quite enjoyed my few days at Colombo—as much at any rate as it is possible to enjoy anything in these times. I got to know old Anderson the Governor very well and to respect him as a shrewd, honest and hardworking man. He has a great deal of knowledge, of course, of rather a varied type, and I found myself talking to him for hours at a stretch with a great deal of satisfaction to myself and apparently to him. Anyhow I hope so. He has only just come out to Ceylon, and he told me that he had been quite content to remain at the Colonial Office if he were wanted there, only Bonar Law was so impossible, so ignorant and so arrogant, he said, that to work with him was impossible. His ideas of administration also were perfectly ridiculous, and all he thought of was the House of Commons and the Conservative Party. Anderson also told me that there had been a terrible moment when Bonar Law had wanted to send Winston Churchill out to East Africa, as Governor and C.-in-C. of the forces out there. Can you imagine such a thing! Anderson said that the fact of the man who is already there as Governor being an excellent man and doing very well and the General being quite satisfactory had no weight whatever in Bonar Law's mind. I suppose he wanted to get W. C. out of the way. And that is the Idol of the Conservative Party, the man who that ass . . . once described to me as a second Disraeli. Ye gods! what have we come to that we have to pick up our

ministers from that class of man! I must say nothing surprises me in Bonar Law. I have always looked upon him as futile—but I little guessed how mischief-making he might be.

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I think Ceylon gives me a greater impression of natural wealth and prosperity than any other place I know. In the island one gets almost any sort of temperature; that up in the hills, which are not at all inaccessible, being like that of a fine English summer with cold nights. The vegetation is luxuriant in the extreme and the fruits perfectly delicious. Pine-apples, mangoes, mangostines, delicious small bananas and a hundred and one other sorts of excellent things, whilst of course rubber, tea and coco-nuts are a source of immense wealth. To drive about the environs of Colombo was very nice, for, though the scenery is not fine, the very green vegetation, the very red roads, the turf, often beautifully kept, and the occasional glimpses one gets of the sea make it very pleasant. There are villas or rather bungalows surrounded by gardens in abundance, some of them owned by Europeans, and others by natives. The attitude of the former towards the latter is different to what it is in India. In Ceylon the aloofness is not so great and the natives, I should say, more considered. They are a gentle race, I should think, but I believe inclined to be treacherous. They tell me that Christianity amongst them is greatly on the decrease. Buddhism is the native religion, if religion it can be called, for it is more of a cult of philosophy really. I had one very pleasant and interesting day. Neville and I motored out to the country seat of a big native swell, the sort of "Maréchal de Noblesse" of the Cingalese. In the morning we shot deer, which were driven to us out of the jungle, not a very exhilarating or exciting form of sport, but pretty and interesting to see how it was managed. We got four deer and then, after a bath, we sat down to a huge, gorgeous but excellent luncheon which ended with a truly marvellous curry. I had eaten already quite enough, if not too much, but my curiosity and greediness would not allow me of refusing this, and strange ingredient after ingredient was offered to me and accepted, until my plate contained enough for a meal for

about six people. It was excellent, but I should have preferred to have it and nothing else for the whole meal. After luncheon our host, educated in England and exactly like a cultivated English country gentleman, except that his face was as black as the ace of spades, took us all round his place and showed us his stable containing some fine thoroughbreds and many cages of strange animals—a regular zoo; and then came the *pièce de résistance*, a parade of fifteen elephants. What wonderful animals!—they literally understand what their keeper tells them and obey like a well-drilled squad of men. The elephant of Ceylon as a rule has no tusks, and a tusker is a freak, but they are more intelligent than the African animal and much more easily trained. All these fifteen did not belong to our host, some of them were the property of a neighbouring Buddhist temple, and are let out by the priests—you can hire an elephant for 5 rupees a day. They tell me that an elephant begins to show signs of old age about 80 or 90 and then they are generally relegated to the training of newly captured animals.

I have actually written four sheets without mentioning the war! and our stay in Colombo was certainly most peaceful and unwarlike. The fact is that the people are not really touched by it, and except that nearly all the English planters have joined the army there is little or no difference. But here, in the middle of the Indian Ocean, I am, thanks to wireless, in touch with all my detachments. Interesting news comes in from the Red Sea, which shows that my policy is beginning to bear fruit. Mecca is apparently in the hands of the Arabs!

June 20. We arrive at Penang to-morrow, and there I meet the C.-in-C. China, with whom I am going to hold a conference on many matters which affect us both. There has been no intercommunication between the two up till now and there are many matters which I want to get settled.

One of the most important of these was the protection of the trade routes against the German surface raiders; it being realized since the *Moeve's* recent raid how necessary it was.

Penang. June 23. Arrived here two days ago and found the C.-in-C. China, as I expected. It is W. L. Grant, who was

with me in the *Britannia* and the senior man of our lot. I am No. 2. We have had great talks and the meeting has been of great mutual benefit. It has been a pleasant meeting, for he is a nice creature, and it is amusing talking of old times; moreover, he was in the North Sea until nine months ago and has been able to relate much to me. I am delighted at having been able to visit this place. I am surprised at the prosperity, even wealth. Tin, rubber and coco-nuts are no doubt as desirable commodities as any place may wish for. Certainly the East has enormous fascinations and in spite of the heat I enjoy these visits thoroughly. It is seeing these places and getting to know their history, why they are British and how they are governed, that gives one a better understanding of the complexity of the Empire. The haphazard manner in which all these places have been acquired and the looseness (apparently) of the tie that binds them to us makes one wonder more and more how it is that we are still one whole, and yet, paradoxical as it may sound, it is this very looseness which is a part of our strength. It is quite impossible for the people here to realize what the war is, because in spite of it, or rather because of it, they flourish, make money and wax fat, and yet all the British are as keen as mustard on taking their share. Practically all the planters have joined the army and the Colony gives freely of its money towards various funds. Whether such money flows into the best of channels is another question altogether.

June 24. At sea. I am on my way back to Colombo and have quite enjoyed my visit to Penang, which is a very beautiful island. The vegetation is like that of Colombo but the scenery finer. Signs of the Far East are also more visible; Chinese and Japanese abound, and the Malay—the proper native—does not appear to be in the ascendant. The Chinese are the more important part of the Colony, and some of them are extremely rich and have gorgeous villas outside the town, which stand in fine gardens. Chinatown is a very curious place and extremely picturesque. The shops with their signs and names of the owner flaunted in huge golden Chinese characters on crimson or black banners, make really a beautiful sight. I drove through it one night in a motor-car and was intensely interested. It was between 11 p.m. and midnight and life and business was in full swing to the light

of innumerable candles and lamps mixed with electric light. The Chinese, nearly all naked to the waist, looked so weird with their yellow parchment-like skins shining in the light. Many of them were gambling in their doorways or at the street corners, the streets crowded and hawkers of every sort of commodity running about, all made up a scene which of course is common enough in these parts but which is intensely interesting to one unaccustomed to such a sight, and it is so long since I was out here last that it is all practically new to me. . . . The English people were more than kind to me, and the officers going out of their way to be civil. . . . One morning I was hauled out of bed to go to a bathing-party. After a very beautiful drive of about four miles we found ourselves at the Swimming Club and a large party of men and women assembled. After gambolling in the water, which by the way was too warm to be really pleasant, we sat down to a huge breakfast spread out on a veranda overlooking the sea. Quite amusing and pleasant because unusual. I can't tell you how much I am looking forward to my arrival at Colombo, where I expect to find letters from you awaiting me and also papers and letters that will give me some detail of the North Sea fight. You can imagine how anxious I am to hear all about that.

On June 29th he was back at Colombo, again enjoying the Governor's hospitality at the Queen's House and

positively immersed in official correspondence. This week, for some reason or other, there has been a perfect avalanche of letters, and if one once gets behindhand woe betide! I need hardly tell you how pleasant has been the gradual easing up of the strain caused by the first received reports of the North Sea battle. Thank God, I now know, that in spite of the loss of so many friends and gallant men there is cause for rejoicing, for though the success was incomplete, it was very substantial, and I hear now from Admiralty that after the first period, when the numbers on either side became anything like equal, the enemy couldn't stand our fire, and that their small craft, destroyers, etc., couldn't face ours. And indeed I am not surprised, for it is difficult to believe that their fire discipline and training in those small

craft can be as good as ours. Sir H. Jackson writes very enthusiastically of the behaviour of all, and it was Beatty's sticking to it that made it possible to inflict the damage we did. I fancy that the enemy's condition when he returned to harbour was not what they would like us to believe.

He made an excursion to Kandy, a long drive of more than three hours. But well worth it. Lovely drive through beautiful scenery and glorious views. Kandy itself extremely pretty lying alongside of a lake and surrounded by fine hills. And excellent luncheon at the hotel and then sightseeing. A very fine Buddhist temple which contains a relic in the shape of Buddha's Tooth. This however I could not see, but was informed that perhaps on some future occasion, if I cared, very quietly it might be shown me. Some exceedingly interesting and beautifully written documents—holy writing—also some very fine jewels and gold bowls, etc., but so much squalor surrounding the magnificences! I am going round to Trincomalee to-morrow and shall establish myself on shore.

Admiralty House, Trincomalee was his official residence in Ceylon, and he intended settling down there for the summer.

Admiralty House, Trincomalee. July 8. I have just arrived here an hour ago, having motored from Colombo. We left there early on Friday morning, motoring till about 4.30, till we arrived at a place called Amaradhapura, an ancient capital of Ceylon, and there we stayed the night and visited most wonderful ruins of about 300 B.C. An ancient city of whose foundations there remain visible signs for an area of 9 miles—also Buddhist temples which are all tawdry and untidy, though occasionally one comes across some very beautiful things in them. The old Pagodas, which are supposed to contain relics of Buddha, are extraordinary and very beautifully built with small bricks. The road through the jungle is pretty enough but uninteresting so far as scenery is concerned, but the gorgeous birds of all colours flying about and the monkeys rushing about among the trees or lolloping over the road, make up for the monotony of the

view. The ship had gone round and here she is lying in harbour within my sight as I look out of the window of my office. The house is nice enough. . . .

He was looking forward to a long stay but the next day:

Sunday, July 9. I went off to church this morning and on my return found a telegram from Admiralty which has decided me to return West immediately. . . .

He left early Monday morning by motor.

July 14. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. . . . I must give you a description of my journey back to Colombo from Trincomalee. A great part of the way lay through jungle, but this time the monotony was not so great; there were more features in the scenery and the beasts one saw even more interesting than before. You never would have imagined the butterflies and moths. Several times we pulled up to have a look at them and were perfectly amazed at their beauty and variety. The birds too are wonderful. Such colouring. Blue, yellow, green and red of the most flaming description—big birds, small birds—ugly birds, beautiful birds—I longed to see some of them closer, and some day I think I must have an aviary. We passed several "tanks" which are nothing more or less than large artificial lakes, made by the old kings of Ceylon for storing water. They are full of crocodiles, which one could see sunning themselves on the banks, and water-fowl of various descriptions. All along the roads of Ceylon, which by the way are excellent, there are rest houses. These are simply Government hotels, and these we stopped at and they were beautifully clean and had excellent food. The first night we stopped at a place called Polonnaruwa, an ancient and ruined city. Nothing there but the rest house and the ruins and some Buddhist statues carved out of the solid rock. The ruins were not so old as those we had seen before and some of them were in a very good state of preservation. The carving is very fine if somewhat monotonous. One great group consisting of a Pagoda (nearly perfect), some temples and what must have been a couple of palaces, we saw as the sun was setting, and the colouring

was beautiful. The Rock Statues are very fine. Imagine yourself walking along a path in the jungle and suddenly coming across a clearing containing a natural amphitheatre, the opposite side to you of which is formed by a long piece of black rock some 300 feet long and perhaps 50 feet high. On the face of this sort of precipice are carved three statues of Buddha, the first in the conventional crossed-legged sitting position, the second standing and the third recumbent. The latter was 47 feet long (I measured it) and the standing figure was about 30 or 40 feet high. Between the sitting and the standing figure is a chapel dug right into the solid rock about 12 feet deep and about the same height. Two pillars, all cut out of the solid rock, looked as if they were supporting the roof, the fact being of course that they are all of the same piece. To come suddenly across this vast rock carving in the middle of the jungle gives one quite an extraordinary feeling—of surprise, admiration and contrast. I sat there for quite half an hour taking it all in, and certain I am that I have never anywhere seen anything that resembles it in any way. The rest house here was on the borders of a tank, and after dinner we sat on the veranda and watched the millions of fire-flies dancing about and the moon shining on the water. . . . The next morning we started off early and drove to Kandy. Much less jungle this time and the country more hilly and finer. Cultivation too and many people, in fact we were leaving the jungle behind us and coming into the coco-nut and rubber districts. Then from Kandy we went on to Nuwara Elya (pronounced Nuralia), a hill station 6,000 feet above the sea—a gorgeous drive—up and up and up, the road twisting and turning like a snake round corners, and hanging on to the hillside as it were. The scenery is really magnificent. At one point one emerges from a pass into a vast basin, one side of which is practically a wall of black rock, God knows how many miles in extent, and over this wall there are no less than eight gigantic waterfalls. I could not even guess at the extent of this panorama. Everything is so huge that there is nothing with which you can contrast it to judge of its size. If anyone were to tell me that the basin were 50 miles in extent I should not be surprised, neither should I be if I were told it were only 10. But to see all the very high waterfalls at the

same time is a very wonderful and very beautiful sight. Out of this basin we slowly climbed by a very well-engineered road, crossed a pass and then dipped down into the plain of Nuwara Elya. What a difference! Suddenly from wild and tropical scenery and foliage one found oneself in what might well be a Swiss valley, except for the fir and pines which don't exist here. The valley has hills on both sides, beautifully wooded and one gets beautiful views. The climate I found delicious and a fire in the evening was very pleasant. Bungalows with charming gardens are dotted about and a very beautiful golf-course with gorse and huge rhododendrons. . . .

The next day I had meant to return to Colombo via Diatalawara, another hill station, where there is a naval camp and where I have a bungalow, but unfortunately we heard that a part of the road was impassable because of floods and so we had to return via Kandy. But I am delighted with Nuwara Elya because if you come out you can always have a cool atmosphere whenever you want it. I am told Diatalawara is just as nice, and there anyhow we have our own house.

Sunday 16. Just arrived at Bombay and on Wednesday next I start Westward Ho.

During his stay at Bombay he dined twice with Lord Willingdon the Governor:

Most courteous and anxious to be civil. A man of sound ideas. He is full of indignation about the way the Mesopotamian campaign is being conducted, and well he may be. I saw some officers from there, at Bombay for sick leave, and from all that I hear from them things are in a very bad way as regards health of the men, etc. The fears that took hold of me in April on this score, and which I fancied were exaggerated, are only too well founded. The fault lies at Headquarters at Simla and the military C.-in-C. is, I expect, the root of all evil. Everybody is open-mouthed about him and his ways. But it is apparently almost impossible to get at them. Simla and Delhi seem to swallow the whole Government up—they shut themselves up like the Mikado of old—they see nobody and they learn nothing. Willingdon was as open to me on the subject as I was to him, and I told him

that, holding the views that he did, I thought it his duty to inform the Home Government. I told him I had done all I could, by writing very openly on the subject to Mr. Balfour, but that of course I could not write to the Secretary of State for India, for very naturally he would not listen to what *I* told him, though he would have to to what he (Willingdon) told him. Luckily for us it appears that the Turks opposite us are in no better situation and that their numbers are dwindling rapidly. My men up there are comparatively well. The heat of course is awful, but we have taken all possible precautions and I am relieving them as I can, for a spell in the hills in Ceylon.

Bombay at this time of year is not agreeable. Hot and damp and nothing doing. Many rumours going round, as is always the case when there are many people with nothing to do. I think we are all rather pleased at the prospect of returning to Egypt. The mental attitude of the people out here is irritating for they seem to look upon the war from such a detached point of view.

On July 19th they sailed for Aden.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARAB REVOLT

THE reason of his hasty recall was a renewed attack on the Canal which, contrary to all previsions, the Turks were about to launch. This more than ever strengthened his conviction that attack being the best means of defence, the true policy was to put pressure upon them through an Arab revolt and he had welcomed the news that the Arabs have taken possession of Mecca and Jeddah, and driven the Turks out. Now I flatter myself that this is the result, at any rate indirectly, of my policy. It was always the policy of Egypt to try and get the Arabs to rise against the Turks, but India would not face the situation. Why I cannot imagine, because it appears to me that Mecca in the hands of friendly Arabs, who moreover are much more orthodox and strict Mahommedans than the Turks, must act favourably on the Mahommedans of India and Egypt. When I arrived out here in January I found the Red Sea Patrol divided into two distinct parts, one working politically under Egypt and the other politically under India, with no sort of liaison or cohesion between them. I saw at once that I had a chance of getting some sort of co-ordination between the two Governments in the matter of policy by amalgamating the two patrols into one, and I did this and actually got the Indian Government to borrow a political officer from Egypt to work on their behalf in their patrol! The results have more than justified my action, for I am quite sure that three months ago we never should have succeeded in getting India to assent to this Arabian policy. This should enormously ease matters in the East. The Arabs on the Tigris should prove more tractable; at Aden too the difficulties of the Turks will be very much augmented, and I should think the effects should reach as far as Syria. Boyle,* late naval attaché at Rome, is my Senior Officer in the Red Sea and he is doing splendidly.

Meanwhile he
rather enjoyed these lazy days at sea. I have been so busy

* Admiral Sir William Boyle, now Lord Cork.

during these past months that nothing to do except to pay attention to one's own affairs is a nice change.

I must say my Staff are eminently satisfactory. All great friends and very good-tempered, and the hot weather does not seem to affect their cheerfulness and well-being in the least. I can imagine that one irritable or bad-tempered man might play the devil in this heat.

However much absorbed in his work or whatever he had in hand, he never ceased taking the most vivid interest in his family, in his friends, even the humblest. He was grieved to hear of the death of Jane, his mother's old maid:

Poor old dear. She was a *lady* and a loyal friend. It is absurd to say one will miss her, and yet one feels that it is another link of the chain with the past broken. I am afraid that none of the family will have been at her funeral, which is sad.

In the midst of his greatest anxieties, when on board the gunboat on the Tigris, he had reminded his wife to convey his many messages to Princess Wittgenstein on her hundredth birthday, the celebration of which thrilled him. Her centenary was indeed an imposing and magnificent festival. All her relations from the warring nationalities—German, Russian, and Italian—had rallied round her, while the Abbé Mugnier, the well-known French ecclesiastic, had come from Paris to deliver an allocution on "friendship." The Pope, who had sent his benediction, which was read at the solemn mass, and almost every sovereign in Europe had telegraphed their congratulations, while at the ensuing reception all countries, belligerent and neutral, were represented. Once more peace seemed to have returned on earth, truly the greatest triumph for the Princess' personality to have been thus able to impose a *trêve de Dieu* even for one day.

What a delightful description of Princess Wittgenstein's centenary; I am sure she must have been delighted with it all, and to think that any one woman, however old and however

distinguished, could in this time of almost universal bloodshed collect such jarring component parts together in such an atmosphere of peace is indeed remarkable and a wonderful tribute to her character. I wish I could have been there, not only for the sake of seeing a very remarkable gathering but also to have made my bow and saluted that wonderful old woman personally.

He had been delighted that his little girl, chiefly impressed by the birthday cake with a hundred candles, should have been taken to this celebration.

Do you remember how anxious we were when she was born she should be taken to see her, fearing every day that the old lady might die of old age before the child could be taken to her?

His daughter's well-being and education were to him a constant source of preoccupation and interest.

I am getting quite frightened of being *shy* when I see her, for she will have grown up so terribly! Tell her not to forget me, but to go on writing. I love her letters. Oh, how I pray that this fighting may really lead to an end!

The days of comparative peace, free from official correspondence and paper work, soon drew to a close, and on July 25th he arrived at Aden.

July 28. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. . . . I spent a couple of days at Aden, where I had much talk with the General which may be of some use some day; and now I am steaming up the Red Sea—weather not so far very hot—and rapidly approaching Egypt, which I expect will be my headquarters for some time to come.

Stories of the battle in the North Sea are beginning to come in, and I have received some interesting letters, besides at last getting Jellicoe's dispatch, or so much of it as the Admiralty have chosen to let us see. There is only one thing to deplore, and that is the (to us) unkind fate which made it possible for the German Fleet to escape annihilation.

With us everything worked out to a T. Beatty did magnificently. He displayed that amount of dash combined with judgment and that willingness to take a risk for a great object, always combined with caution, not mere recklessness, which shows a true leader. He stuck to the enemy, engaging a superior force, and managed to bring them within striking distance of Jellicoe. It was climatic conditions prevented the Fleet as a whole from getting the utmost gain out of his well-judged movements. Our destroyers and light craft were magnificent. The stories of how some of these small craft dashed in and engaged the enemy's heavy ships is splendid reading, for it was not mere reckless and stupid brute courage. The fact that they did so much with so little damage to themselves proved that they had judged correctly and that the German crews were very much demoralized by the hammering they were receiving. All accounts show that the enemy's fire was very accurate at first, but that its excellence fell off directly they began to be struck by our projectiles, whilst our shooting never deteriorated. It makes one mad to think by how little we missed a real big victory, but all the same one is so immensely proud of the Service. Officers, both senior and junior, and men, all have come through the first ordeal of what could have been nothing but real hell as one felt sure they would, and we have that feeling of confidence of being man for man better than our enemy which can only result in one way if ever they give us the chance again. Thank God! the right spirit seems to animate the whole Fleet—no boasting, true modesty and absolute self-reliance and confidence. The blowing up of those big ships is at present inexplicable to me, but I am inclined to think the authorities may be able now to get some knowledge from the experience gained—perhaps in construction. Jack Sinclair wrote me a charming short account of it all from his point of view. He is a splendid man and as truly and naturally modest as he is good at his job. He has a Zeppelin to his credit. . . .

In the meantime the situation in Arabia is not without its interest. The Government of India is very much disturbed about the Arabian revolt and the fact of Mecca being in Arabian hands. The Indian Mahommedan world is always to them a sword of Damocles, but then I have personally

such a contempt for the Government of India that I cannot bring myself to look upon any of their ideas with sympathy. They say that their Mahommedans do not like the idea of Mecca and the Holy Places being in Arabian hands. I ask them why? Arabs are Mahommedans and according to their own ideas much better Mahommedans than the Turks, whom they heartily despise. Nobody in India that I have spoken to can answer me that question satisfactorily, and can only say it is so. Now it seems to me that Mahommedans all the world over outside the Turkish Empire, must be morally sitting on a fence, and it ought to be possible for the Government of India to bring them down on the right side. But they do nothing in this case as in all other cases. They sit there pusillanimously wondering what is going to happen next, frightened to make any move.

Meanwhile I have raised the blockade on Jeddah and the way is open to the pilgrims for the first time since the war began. Of course we cannot help the Shereef of Mecca with Christian troops—it is part of our bargain and naturally the true policy that no unbelievers shall enter the Holy Region. Personally I am inclined to think that the Shereef has bitten off more than he can swallow and that we shall probably hear of Mecca falling into the hands of the Turks again before long. But in the meantime I have the Red Sea properly in my hands and have completely put a stop to any enemy traffic there. I shall of course see the High Commissioner and all his people before very long, and shall hear their views. People who know the Mahommedan world well tell me there is always a danger of a fanatical wave passing over it *suddenly*—but if no action takes place immediately after a crisis, there is little danger of such happening afterwards. . . .

Sunday, July 30. The heat is increasing. Yesterday was by far the hottest day I have experienced since I have been out here—always excepting my journey through India to Simla, and I don't think we shall find Egypt exactly a cool spot. I hear that there are all sorts of ugly rumours in England as to knowledge received by the enemy of Kitchener's journey. It is a fact that the mine-field in which the *Hampshire* met her fate was only laid that morning, and although the public in general were ignorant of the fact of his journey

"Ministerial Ladies" were openly talking of his mission to Russia. . . .

As for Ireland—the whole subject is perfectly heart-rending. The evidence given before the Commission brings forth to the light the true facts about the government of that unhappy country, and now I can fully sympathize with Irishmen of *all* Parties. If I were being governed in that manner I am sure I should be a Home Ruler or anything that was anti-Government. In the meantime from an Imperialist point of view I cannot see that the late Rebellion is any reason for giving them Home Rule now. The Government have put themselves in such a position that whatever they do they will seriously alienate the sympathies of countless numbers of people. Of that there can be no doubt. Whatever they do there will always, during the war, be danger in Ireland. Therefore, even from the non-moral point of view, they should take the steps that are least likely to inconvenience us from the war point of view, and that, I hold, would be to place Ireland under Martial Law until the war is finished. The House of Commons is in such a state that I feel pretty sure that such a thing would pass. Of course it means strong measures (which the Government seem incapable of taking) and ignoring the Nationalist members. . . . I think we often make such dreadful mistakes about the Irish because we never consider that they are so entirely different to us. We try to judge them as though they were the same race as ourselves and seem to forget that they are fundamentally different. That is one of the great English faults. We always look upon other nationalities as though they must have the same aims, aspirations and ideas as ourselves. We never realize that others' ideas of duty or patriotism or any other ideals may be absolutely different from ours.

He was back once more in Egyptian waters just at the psychological moment.

Sunday, August 6. . . . I have been interviewing Generals, etc., as to future possibilities, and find myself right in the thick of Egyptian and Arabian politics—full of interest. I have not yet had time to go and see the High Commissioner,

who is established at Alexandria, but I am going there this week. Our troops had a splendid little success yesterday—drove the Turks back about 30 miles East of Canal and captured some 2,000 prisoners. It was a success much wanted to help the Arabs.

This was the battle of Rumani, where the Turks, who on July 19th had opened an attack on the Suez Canal, were utterly routed, losing 7,000 killed, wounded, and captured out of a total 14,000.

. . . I feel very flattered at the warmth of my reception here. Murray was delighted to have me back, and the High Commissioner, to whom I have been talking over the telephone, tells me he has missed me every day since I have been away. All these people like having an independent person to talk matters over with, and I seem to be the sort of central link for them all.

The Residency, Alexandria. Aug. 9. I came down to Alexandria a couple of days ago to see to the hundred and one complications which are always turning up and am staying with the McMahons, who are as kind and hospitable as ever. . . .

I went to visit the Sultan, and he was so delighted to see me that he is actually coming to return my call!—I am told quite an unheard-of proceeding. So to-morrow he comes to see me on board the *Hannibal*.

The next day

the Sultan paid me a visit of more than an hour. I hadn't much to show him, as the ship on board which I received him can hardly be called modern or interesting. However, I showed him all there was to be shown, and then we sat in a little sort of kiosk that I had caused to be erected on the Quarter-Deck and over cups of quite good coffee we proceeded to discuss, as usual, every sort and kind of subject. It appears that his visit to me is quite unprecedented, as he never goes anywhere except to official dinners.

Everybody very pleased over this success of ours to the Eastward of the Canal, and nobody more so than I. Our success has been so great and the enemy so demoralized that

we shall be clear here of any trouble for many a month to come, if not for good and all. And now I can devote the whole of my energies to the Arab question, which is very intricate, very interesting and at present very ticklish. If only India and Egypt could work more harmoniously! I need hardly tell you that after what I have seen farther East, the whole of my sympathies are with Egypt, and the knowledge of the situation is *here*, not there. . . .

Wemyss had from the outset descried all the possibilities, the influence the Arab rising might exercise on the ultimate outcome of the war in the Eastern theatre, and from henceforth devoted all his energies to its furtherance and ultimate success, thus well deserving the appellation of the "Father and Mother of the Revolt" bestowed upon him by the Arabs.

Meanwhile he rejoiced in the victory so lately obtained over the Turks.

It is a real blow for them since their organization is entirely smashed up, and even if they can send more troops to this part of the world, their difficulties of supply and transport have been enormously increased. Two days ago I rode on the battlefield and had the whole of the tactics explained to me, exceedingly interesting. General Lawrence is the hero of that affair. A very extraordinary man. Out of the Army for fifteen years and now showing himself to be a most able soldier. I was talking to him yesterday, and he told me that he did not take a gloomy view of the situation as a whole, though of course the taxation of years to come must be dreadfully heavy. It is pleasant coming across a soldier like him, who can talk intelligently of other things besides military tactics. . . .

. . . I am wondering where the Dardanelles and Mesopotamian Commissions will be sitting, and if I shall be called upon to give evidence. I rather doubt it. Asquith apparently tried to shuffle out of getting their inception being one of the questions to be inquired into, and that I look upon as being the most important part of the whole business.

About this time he received

a piteous letter from Sir Percy Lake in Mesopotamia expressing surprise and indignation at his being relieved of his command! He also tells me that my visit to Simla actually did good, as he noticed a decided improvement on the part of the Indian Government to accede to their demands after my visit! I am delighted but surprised. Certainly something to be proud of if I really managed to get a move on that hide-bound, tape-tied Bureaucracy!

News had reached him that Sir B. Duff, the C.-in-C. in India, had gone home and he felt confident he would not return.

I hear rumours of Sir Charles Monro succeeding him. From what I know of the latter, I don't think he will allow himself to fall into India's phlegmatic ways.

When Sir Charles Monro, duly appointed C.-in-C., on his way out to India, passed through Egypt shortly after, we met with the greatest cordiality and are real friends, in spite of the differences we had at Mudros as to Policy. I was able to tell him a little about Mesopotamia and also to give him my views as to the state of affairs generally.

At the end of August Wemyss was back again at Alexandria, this time accompanied by Captain Boyle, to talk over the state of affairs in the Red Sea with the High Commissioner.

Matters are ticklish, but I don't see any reason for thinking they may become bad, but there is always the possibility of things not turning out as they should and is all the more the case when one has Arabs to deal with.

The situation at that time seemed fraught with many threats and difficulties. There appeared every prospect that the Turks, firmly entrenched at Medina, would now try and recapture Mecca, a contingency Wemyss had long looked upon as possible. Furthermore, should they do so, it was likely it would be by way of Rabegh, a port on the Red Sea,

which offered the easiest route and moreover was stacked with vast supplies accumulated by the British for the benefit of the Shereef and his followers.

The High Commissioner and the Sirdar therefore pressed General Murray to send troops to defend Rabegh, which, however, he did not see his way to do. The question was referred home and led to the usual hesitations and indecisions on the part of the Government; streams of telegrams passed between London, Cairo, Khartoum, Simla, and Mesopotamia; and finally, after the War Office and the Foreign Office, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the War Committee, the Viceroy of India, the C.-in-C.s in Egypt and in Mesopotamia had all in turn been consulted, the matter remained in suspense. It was evident that if Rabegh was to be defended, it could only be so by the Navy.

Ever bent on conciliation and co-operation Wemyss now sought to clear away all misunderstandings between those on the spot.

Since I last wrote we (the High Commissioner, the General and myself) with some of our Staffs have had a conference (September 13th) on the state of affairs in the Hedjaz. I think we all learnt each other's minds and cleared the atmosphere somewhat. The differences, if there were any, lay between the High Commissioner and the General, but now I think they understand each other better, and there is likely to be complete co-operation, at any rate so far as they are concerned.

He later on told both McMahon and Murray that

were I in either of their places I should not consult the Authorities at home half as much as they do. Personally I go my own sweet way and inform Admiralty *afterwards* of what I have done. So far at any rate the plan has succeeded admirably. I do what I like and the Admiralty are, I believe, delighted at having the necessity of taking decisions taken out of their hands.

Another matter greatly fluttering the official doves

was the advent on September 1st of a French Mission headed by Colonel Brémont, who had served many years in North Africa and was an Arabic scholar of great merit. Composed of Algerian Moslem notables and Moslem officers, they were on their way to the Hedjaz to carry presents and subsidies from the French Government to the Shereef and were followed a few days later by a Franco-African pilgrimage to Mecca.

The annual ceremony of the Holy Carpet, with the accompanying pilgrimage from Cairo, had had to be omitted the year before owing to the blockade, and the fact that Mecca was then in the hands of the Turks. The High Commissioner was therefore very anxious it should go safely this year, while Wemyss, to add further lustre to the occasion, proposed it should be conveyed to Jeddah in one of his men-of-war—H.M.S. *Hardinge*.

Sept. 24. . . . On Wednesday last I went to Cairo with Murray to witness the ceremonies attendant on its (Holy Carpet) departure. We went up by special train and drove from the Station to the Citadel with a mounted escort. The ceremony took place on a huge parade-ground on one side of which is a sort of Pavilion with one side entirely open. In this Pavilion was a chair for the Sultan and on each side were arranged his High Officers and various Sheiks and Holy Men, many of whom were to do the pilgrimage. On the ground were paraded a lot of Egyptian troops, extremely smart, and soon after our arrival the Sultan drove up in state. The whole turn-out was really beautiful. He himself was in a very large State Barouche, drawn by four beautiful Bay horses. State harness and State liveries all very much like the London ones, only of course the servants wore fezes instead of cocked hats. The escort of Lancers was really superb, and I have never seen anything better turned out than the whole thing. On his arrival, after having warmly greeted all of us, he proceeded to his chair, and then from behind the line of troops there appeared a string of camels. The leading one had on his back a very fine Howdah, all

red with gold decorations and texts from the Koran. Inside of this was supposed (I say supposed because I believe it really wasn't there) to be the Carpet. This camel was followed by half a dozen others also with many trappings not less gorgeous than those of the former, and on each was a Bedouin Chief who was playing on a reed instrument the music of which at first was quite inaudible. I naturally expected that they were producing Arab tom-tom music; imagine therefore my surprise when, on their closer approach, I recognized the Egyptian National Hymn! These camels, escorted by horse and foot police (all turned out spick and span) proceeded solemnly to perambulate the parade-ground three times, at the end of which they stopped at the steps of the Pavilion. The Sultan then came down to them, and the tassel at the end of the halter of the Carpet Camel was handed to him and he proceeded to kiss it and press it to his forehead and eyes; one or two other high dignitaries did the same and the ceremony was over and Camels, Carpet, Sultan and all left the parade amidst much thundering of cannon and rattle of arms. I was much interested; it was a mixture of East and West that could only happen at Cairo or Constantinople. The Sultan and his turn-out and the troops and the parade were all European (except for the fez) whilst the camels and Sheiks and their entourage were entirely Asiatic.

Two days later (September 23rd) Wemyss himself left for Jeddah in the *Euryalus*. Desirous of learning if possible at first hand the truth of the various contradictory reports as to the state of affairs with the Shereef, he wished his visit to coincide with the arrival of the Holy Carpet.

*In the old days, the whole pilgrimage was done by land and the Camel and its precious burden marched the whole way to Mecca. Latterly, however, it has been embarked at Suez and taken by sea to Jeddah. This year I am sending it in a man-of-war, and there is a spice of excitement added to the whole thing by the fact that its safe arrival at Mecca is by no means certain. The Turks are at Medina, and there they have a Carpet of their own from Constantinople and

also another Shereef, the nominee of the Sultan (of Turkey), and I think they will make every endeavour to break through and get to Mecca first and incidentally attack *our* Carpet on the way. *We* can't put Christian troops into that country, and it resolves itself into the question of whether the Shereef is strong enough to hold his own against the Turks. It is this we get such contradictory reports about, and of course all the Arabs are sitting on the fence—so the situation, you see, is not easy. Hence *my* pilgrimage to Jeddah. I have got Storrs, the Oriental Secretary of the Residency, with me, and I hope to have an interesting time and to be able perhaps to do some good. We have poured arms and ammunition and gold into the lap of the Shereef, but I am sure he will *ask* for troops, knowing full well that we can't send them for policy's sake, simply that he may say he hasn't been properly backed up.

When I reached Jeddah on the evening of Tuesday 26th Sept. I found that the *Hardinge*, carrying the Holy Carpet and its Escort, had arrived a few hours previously.

On the following morning I was received at the quay with much honour and courtesy by the Shereef Mohsin and other leading inhabitants of the town. I was conducted through the streets and bazaars on horseback, preceded by a camel guard and surrounded by an armed escort on foot to Mohsin's residence, where we exchanged flowery compliments to the accompaniment of bitter coffee and sweet sherbet.

Mr. Storrs, the Oriental Secretary to the High Commissioner, who accompanied me, got into direct telephonic communication with the Grand Shereef at Mecca, who, it appears, was much gratified at my having come to Jeddah and also at the part played by H.M. ships in conveying the Mahmal; and he did everything in his power to give me a warm welcome, bidding me to a banquet which I was fortunately unable to accept, and going so far as to send down a special messenger with a basket of fruit from his own garden at Mecca for my acceptance. He also assured me that had it not been for the ceremonies connected with the arrival of the Holy Carpet keeping him at Mecca, he would have come down to Jeddah to personally welcome me. I replied with all the eloquence I could command, and assured him of the equal pleasure it gave me, not only

personally, but as an officer of high rank in H.M.'s service to be in such touch as was given by a telephone with a personage of such eminence as His Highness.

The whole of the proceedings during my progress through the town were marked with the utmost cordiality, and I was assured by officers of experience who accompanied me that behind the flowery Oriental language employed in bidding me welcome there lay a real substance of pleasure and good will.

I took the occasion to mark with all the pomp and ceremony which was at my disposal the landing of the Holy Carpet at Jeddah. This was a question which I had much debated with myself, as it had been hinted to me that the Moslem population would not be particularly pleased at so much circumstance being given to it by Christians; but I know now that the contrary is the case and that the inhabitants of Jeddah and all the Pilgrims who are assembled there are much gratified at the honours paid to it.

The Escort of the Holy Carpet consisted of picked Egyptian troops and was commanded by an Egyptian Brigadier-General. We exchanged visits of courtesy, and when he arrived on board in his Pilgrim's costume consisting only of a somewhat scanty bath-sheet loosely wrapped round his person and kept together by a "Sam-Browne" belt, I noticed that the guard of honour drawn up to receive him had some difficulty in keeping their countenances. On my returning his visit the situation was reversed. Myself in uniform, I was confronted by a guard and band habited in Pilgrim attire, and it was I who now had the difficulty in keeping my countenance whilst the bandmaster was struggling to prevent his unaccustomed draperies from interfering with his duties of conducting.

The Brigadier was most anxious to impress upon me his gratitude for the manner in which he, his charge and its escort had been received and conveyed to Jeddah, and assured me that the Pilgrimage would be one to be remembered on account of the manner in which the Mahmal had been started on its way. The Shereef Mohsin paid me a visit on board the *Euryalus* the same afternoon, and as he had never seen anything bigger than the *Fox*, he was much struck with all that was shown him. His astonishment at the

size of the 9.2 guns, at the wireless operator's room and at the search-lights was truly childish, and it was rather astonishing coming as it did from a man of education. I was informed that on his departure from the ship, he told one of his companions that indeed "God had guided them right in joining them to the nation which had such prodigious engines of war." That he felt quite happy on board was proved by the fact that he made use of my stern walk for making his everting prayer.

On Thursday 28th September I proceeded round to Rabegh in H.M.S. *Hardinge*. I had previously told the Captain of the *Dufferin*, who was already there, to inform Ali Bey, the Grand Shereef's son, who commands the Arab forces at Rabegh, of my intended visit, and that I hoped he would provide me and my Staff with horses in order that I might myself inspect his positions and see how best I could help him with Naval guns. On my arrival the Captain of the *Dufferin* informed me that ever since his arrival there some few days before, Ali Bey had consistently thrown difficulties in the way of his landing, always postponing for 24 hours his proposed visit on some trivial excuse. I was not therefore very surprised when I received a message from Ali Bey to say that he proposed coming on board to welcome me, but that he regretted that it was impossible for him to take me round that day. It seemed to me that this attitude on his part might arise from any of the following circumstances. Firstly: either that he was afraid that as Christians our presence in the Hedjaz might be resented by his followers; secondly: that he might be disinclined to let me see the poverty of his arrangements; or, thirdly: that it might be intrigue on the part of some of his doubtful followers who look with a cold eye on British assistance. As I considered that none of these circumstances justified his refusal, I informed him by letter that I was very much surprised at his attitude, and I pointed out that it hardly coincided with his calls for assistance from the British Government, and I went on to say that if I could not land it was quite impossible to judge as to how I could best assist him, and that under such circumstances the presence of H.M. ships would be useless and that therefore I should be compelled to inform my Government of the fact, and that as a result

they would probably be withdrawn. My message certainly had the desired effect, for he hastened to inform me that he would come on board to pay his respects early in the morning and that he would provide as many horses as I wished and would show me everything on the following day.

The next morning he accordingly arrived and was received on board with the honours due to his position. I took the opportunity to impress upon him that ships were of little use unless it was known how best to dispose of them; that it was imperative that I should know accurately the position of his defences and how he intended to resist a possible attack by the enemy, and I added that his reception of me hardly coincided with the very warm welcome extended to me by his father. He assured me that the whole thing was a misunderstanding and that he was only too willing to afford me and my officers any assistance, and he invited me cordially to his camp and lines. Whether this was really the case, or whether intrigues had been busy attempting to stop my visit I do not know, but from his manner and that of Nuri Bey, his chief of the staff, I am inclined to think that he had been kept in ignorance and that intrigues were taking place of which he was ignorant. I cannot help thinking, however, that the incident has not been without its uses, inasmuch as it has shown him that we cannot be played with according to their whims. The forenoon was spent most agreeably and profitably in riding round the positions and seeing the country. I did not see many of the troops, but those who were paraded and the Bedouin camp-followers all seemed to be of a perfectly friendly disposition and saluted and greeted one with politeness, if not with cordiality. We returned to the ship with assurances from Ali Bey that his officers would co-operate heartily with the Captains of H.M. ships and that they would do anything in their power to produce cordial relations.

Ali Bey himself is a fine specimen of a high-bred Arab, and impressed me most favourably as a sincere and very courteous gentleman, and during the whole of the five hours we spent in each other's company there was never anything in his manner nor in any of his actions that did not breathe of cordiality and friendship.

It is important to note that this visit is one of considerable

interest, as it is the first time that a Christian has been officially welcomed in the Hedjaz and on the Holy Ground of Islam. It has broken the ice of the traditional prejudice of the Mahommedan against the presence of Christians in the Hedjaz, a prejudice of such long standing as to have become a national trait in their character; it has proved that at least this prejudice will not stand the presence of necessity.

Ali Bey is the eldest son of the Grand Shereef and consequently a direct lineal descendant of the Prophet, and the fact that he himself should have cordially welcomed me in this, to Islam, sacred country, is a substantial proof that there is no foundation for the belief that it is against the Mahommedan religion to allow Christians to set foot on such soil.

Colonel Wilson Pasha, the Pilgrimage Officer at Jeddah, who had been of great assistance to Wemyss, complained that the arrival of the French Mission had not improved his position. For while he had always had the thankless task of trying to persuade the Grand Shereef that the presence of British troops was not necessary, his French colleague had been in the happier position of being able to offer aid in the matter of French personnel. This had had the effect of making the population look upon him as of secondary importance. He had, however, been happy to ascertain that the Admiral's visit, the unusual welcome extended to him by the Grand Shereef, and the four funnels of the *Euryalus* had completely altered all this and re-established his position as the first personage of the place.

Wemyss was too broad-minded, too free himself of the smallest tinge of jealousy, whether personal, professional, or national, not to deprecate the rivalries, suspicions, and jealousies whether between Allies, or India and Egypt, or politicians and the fighting forces, or the Army and Navy, which were so constantly arising during the war, which did so much to hamper common action and were to cost us so dear.

Whatever qualities Arabs may or may not possess, it

cannot be denied that they are past-masters in the arts of diplomacy and bargaining. As in former days Sultan Abdul Hamid with the Great Powers, so did these sons of the desert with the consummate skill a Talleyrand might have envied play off Turks against Allies, French against English, till finally "Arabia Deserta" ran with gold, apparently flooded by a veritable stream of Pactolus.

Besides stupendous sums the amount of which will never be known, the British Government had allowed the Shereef and his sons since the beginning of the Revolt £150,000 in gold a month, after the capture of Wej £175,000, after the taking of Akaba £200,000, and in 1918 £225,000 a month.

Oct. 1. H.M.S. "Euryalus." At sea. I am now on my way back to Ismailia from Jeddah, having spent a most interesting time there, and having, I sincerely hope, done some good. As regards the famous Carpet, it can't help arriving at Mecca safe now. It should be there to-morrow, and the Turks now cannot possibly stop it or in any way interfere with the pilgrimage; neither can they possibly get their Carpet and pilgrims through in time.

On approaching it from the sea, Jeddah presented a most beautiful sight. It was late afternoon and the sun shining upon it gave a marvellous brilliancy to the town which had the appearance of a collection of white marble palaces (very different alas! to reality). The high mountains in the far background showed up in pale mauve, whilst the surrounding arid sandy country gave out shimmering pale golden hues. The sea is full of reefs, which divides it up into small lakes and lagoons as it were, and accounts I suppose for the marvellous differences in the colour of the water—greens and blues of every shade. It was like a transformation scene at a Xmas pantomime, and like the transformation scene did not last long. With the sun below the horizon all the gorgeous colouring departed and the next morning the town and its environs were nothing but an ordinary Arab town in an arid part of desolate Arabia. I don't think I can do better than send you a copy* of the account of my

doings. To make the situation clear to you I must explain that Rabegh is a harbour and that the Turks must pass it to get to Mecca from Medina, where they are now. Fresh water and the road are the reasons for this, so that if we can deny them Rabegh they never can get to Mecca. In the meantime I am inclined to believe that the Turk will give up all idea of trying to get to Mecca. His difficulties are great and he hasn't any idea if we have any or not. Isn't it interesting to think that I am the first Christian who has ever been officially allowed into the Hedjaz? You will see on reading the account how shy they were of allowing me to land, but how I insisted and got my way. . . .

. . . The war goes on with continued success on our side in France. I am in hopes the enemy will not retire, but I think they will. If they do not, I do not see how they can avert eventual defeat in the field, which I should think is exactly what they would try to do. There is no doubt that our successes are having a very good effect on the Arabs, as you may be sure that I take every possible means of letting them know. I was able to tell Ali Bey of the fall of Combles and Thiepval and his eyes literally sparkled when he heard of it. You can't think what a distinguished-looking man he is, and mounted on a magnificent Arab charger he was a veritable picture.

Everybody seems pleased with the result of my visit to Jeddah. I shall go there again next month and very likely go to Khartoum to see the Sirdar, who also has a finger in this Arabian pie, he wrote on October 12th.

Before doing so, however, he embarked on one of the patrol yachts, the *North Sea*, for a tour of inspection of the Western Ports of Egypt. A final attack on the Senoussi was being organized.

I spent an agreeable and quite profitable day going round all the defences of Sollum with the General and inspecting the naval part of the defence. Most perfect days in the matter of weather that I have ever experienced. Cloudless sky, sun not too hot, a gentle and delicious breeze and the sea blue, blue, blue, such as only the sea can be, and in the middle of

the day some of the lighter coloured of the brown cliffs also assumed this blue colour. It really was beautiful.

A week later he was again on the way to Jeddah, and after many conferences on the ever-burning question of the Hedjaz, crossed to Port Sudan on his way to Khartoum. He was accompanied on this occasion by Captain Lawrence, afterwards so well known as the hero of the Arab Revolt.

Nov. 6. The Palace, Khartoum. You see where my wanderings are leading me to. Khartoum of all places in the world! I have come here to consult with the Sirdar, who has now much to do with the situation in the Hedjaz. I left the ship at Port Soudan, where we arrived yesterday, Sunday. The Sirdar is more than kind. A special train and his own saloon with every comfort and even luxury was placed at my disposal and I travelled here in great comfort. The journey took about 27 hours through for the most part monotonous country; the first three hours out of Port Soudan was through strange barren mountains. For some distance we got out of the train and travelled in an open trolly, which was very pleasant. We arrived here at 4 o'clock this afternoon and I was received with tremendous pomp. A guard of 100 men, many officers drawn up and the Sirdar himself and his Staff. The streets were lined with troops and police, and we were escorted from the Station to the Palace by a splendid escort of Lancers mounted on white horses.

Nov. 7. The Palace, Khartoum. I wish I could describe Khartoum to you, but it is difficult. When one thinks seventeen years ago the whole place was a mass of ruins of an old Arab town one is struck with amazement. Let me begin with the Palace itself, in which I am at this moment ensconced in a huge sitting-room which has a marble balcony overlooking the Blue Nile. It is really a very fine building with huge verandas with marble floors, on the bank of the River and surrounded by a large and very fine garden in which there is turf all the year round—splendid trees, beautiful roses and many English annuals. The rooms are large and lofty and there is an air of marble staircases about the whole place which is very suitable. Out of my window I can

see the junction of the Blue and White Nile and one sees much green, and the last thing one would imagine is the fact that one is practically in the desert. Last night towards sunset the Sirdar took me up on the roof and showed me from whence Gordon had watched the scene and had finally seen the Mahdi's troops cross over from the opposite bank of the River and eventually break through the line. Whilst we were standing there the sun went down in a blaze of colour and there crowded through my mind the whole story of Gordon—of his strange character, of his heroism and almost fanaticism, of the difficulty everybody found in dealing with him, and finally of his betrayal and death. All these things had been out of my mind for years, so quickly do matters follow in each other's footsteps and it does one good to be reminded of them on the spot. Then there comes the other page of history, the taking of Khartoum—the Khalifa, and the regeneration of the Soudan—and it is necessary to be on the spot to realize all that has been and is being done. This morning I went a regular round of inspection; I saw the Gordon College, the Military School, a sort of Soudanese Sandhurst, and the Cathedral of which one has heard so much. I wasn't disappointed in a single one.

This morning comes the news that the Sirdar is to be High Commissioner for Egypt. I do most sincerely trust that McMahon is not being ignominiously turned out but is going to be given some other job; he is what they call out here "a real white man" and has filled a very trying position in very delicate times with at least all absence of fuss and rows, which might easily have been quite different. Unless they have some other good appointment I shall think he has been extremely badly treated. I shall miss Lady McMahon enormously. She is a real nice woman and an extremely amusing one at that. Wingate of course is delighted, and if he is not a success it will certainly not be from want of experience of matters Egyptian.

Nov. 8. The Palace, Khartoum. My kind host, the Sirdar, keeps me very busy. This morning at his earnest request I inspected the Dockyard, an exceedingly well-run establishment. It provides for all the different craft on the River which are all the property of the Government. They even own the tourist steamers, which in ordinary years do a

roaring trade, especially among the Americans who go up the River to shoot big game. The Government in fact do a sort of Cook and Son business which is indeed one of the principal sources of their revenue. This afternoon we went all over the battlefield of Omdurman and were shown over it by an officer, who, with the exception of the Sirdar himself, is the last officer who took part in it to remain in the Soudan. He is the man who captured Osman Digna, and he told me that on that occasion he was 25 hours on the back of the Camel! In between all this sightseeing I have been having much useful talk with the Sirdar, and we have come to a good understanding about the Hedjaz. I am delighted to meet with *one* military authority who is able to lay down a policy. We have made great friends. He also appears to be great friends with the Sultan, which is a blessing.

Nov. 13. *H.M.S. "Euryalus."* At sea. . . . Whilst still at Khartoum I received the news of the sinking of the *Arabia*, the homeward-bound P. & O. with the mails. . . . Thank God, everybody was saved except two firemen, who seem to have been killed by the explosion—what a dastardly form of warfare! No warning of any kind and the ship full of wretched, harmless passengers. It is in no self-sanctifying mood that I say thank God our officers are incapable of doing such things, even if they had German ships as targets.

To continue my own affairs. I left Khartoum on Friday, amidst many expressions of regret on the part of the Sirdar, after a most enjoyable and useful visit. We formulated many plans anent the Hedjaz and came to a very happy mutual understanding. I am bound to say that I think affairs in the Hedjaz will be better managed under the new regime than formerly. This will not be owing altogether to Wingate's replacement of McMahon but to the fact that at last the Government seem to have realized that more co-ordination is necessary, and I am in hopes that Wingate will have a freer hand.

After a night in the train I arrived at Port Soudan on Saturday and immediately sailed for Jeddah, where I saw various officers and issued some fresh orders necessitated by the change of affairs and am now on my way back to Egypt. I have received a most interesting souvenir from the Shereef, or rather the "King of the Arabs" as he now styles himself,

in the shape of a piece of last year's Holy Carpet—about one yard square. It really is a curiosity, and I don't suppose any other Christian besides the Sirdar and myself have such a thing. On the arrival of the new Carpet every year, the old one becomes the property of the Shereef, who usually sells pieces of it to devout and rich pilgrims for fabulous sums, and these pieces are treasured by their owners as the most sacred of sacred relics. He also presented me with an Arab head-dress. I am still in hopes of meeting him himself. . . .

I suppose now that until the spring there will be a cessation of any more big attacks in France. I am disappointed that we have not taken Bapaume. I see that the Polish question is coming to the front, as you predicted. . . . How interesting it all is! You can't think how thrilled I am even over my little business here. What I have tried to do among other things, and believe I have succeeded, is in keeping quite apart from the petty squabbles and differences between all the soldiers and politicians and being a sort of mutual meeting-ground for them all. They all pour out their woes about one another to me, and though none of their differences are really very great, it is amusing trying to keep them all from getting too great. Of course it is possible that they pour each other's woes about me into each other's ears, but I don't think they do because I am so independent of them all, that I don't ever clash with them. It appears to me that I am the only person among them that has, or takes, a free hand. They are always deluging their different heads of departments with lengthy telegrams and going into what appears to me unnecessary detail. I never ask the Admiralty *anything* if I can help it—do a thing and then tell them. It has been very successful so far and saves me any amount of trouble, and I believe that the Admiralty appreciate it.

On reaching Ismailia he learnt with no little indignation of the treatment meted out to the High Commissioner and the scant courtesy he had received at the hands of the Foreign Office.

I am very sorry he is going, not only from a personal but from a general point of view. I think he has done extremely

well. McMahon has certainly kept things quiet and has treated the continually arising question of the mixed Courts with admirable patience and tact, and has quietly and unostentatiously used the existence of Martial Law with very great effect, though of course the law itself, being martial, is administered by the Generals.

Reverting to the same subject on December 14th he wrote:

I have no words to express my ideas on the way in which they (McMahons) have been treated. He takes it all like a gentleman and only says that if it is really for the public weal he has nothing to say, but that they might have done it in a more considerate manner. The hard lines of it all to him is that if they had not put him in here he would have been still serving in India, where he made a great name for himself, and now he will have nothing to do and consequently no pay.

In Cairo the High Commissioner's recall was attributed to a Foreign Office intrigue, the reason of their wanting to get rid of him being that he is not a Foreign Office man and in that they have only partially succeeded, as the War Office stepped in and insisted on Wingate.

This version was later on corroborated by Sir Mark Sykes:

It appears that poor McMahon was ruthlessly chucked out from here simply because he had been an Indian Official and the Foreign Office were jealous. They had been furious at his being given the appointment at all and had intended it for one of their out-of-job people! Mark Sykes' remarks on the Foreign Office are indeed withering.

Another loss to Wemyss at this time was caused by the resignation of Sir H. Jackson, First Sea Lord, for whom he had both respect and admiration. On November 26th reports had reached him

of an anti-Admiralty intrigue by the Harmsworth Press. I hope to goodness that it won't result in Jackson's leaving.

I feel confidence in him and do not see who there is to take his place.

Rumours to this effect had been afloat ever since spring, for referring to them as far back as March 24th he had written:

How disgraceful are these intrigues of Fisher and his misguided and unpatriotic friends. I am truly sorry for Jackson, who I think is doing well; anyhow he has the courage and wisdom to keep his mouth shut. I advisedly say courage because it must be tempting for him to even hint at the many successes he has achieved and which for policy's sake are kept quiet. I know of them because I am in correspondence with him, and though I don't suppose he tells me all, I know enough to realize the situation.

Dec. 3. . . . And so they have another change at the Admiralty! Personally I am extremely sorry. My relations with Jackson have been unusually cordial and satisfactory, and so far as I am concerned nothing could possibly have been better. It brings home to one how much one is cut off here from all that is happening at home, when one finds oneself unable satisfactorily to criticize such changes. If it is beneficial to effect a change at all, I am glad to think that one can accept Jellicoe's appointment with satisfaction and faith. I have no doubt that Jackson himself, being perfectly free of any personal ambition, will not be sorry to give up. A man quite unable, I should think, to cope with intrigue, he hated what may be called the theoretical part of his job, and I should never be surprised to hear that he was worn out. What his policy has been as regards the North Sea I am not in a position to know—but this I do know, that at a critical moment he stepped into the breach and restored to the Navy that confidence which the combination of Winston Churchill and Fisher had well-nigh ruined. What in peace-time was his strength, viz. his humility and modesty, was in war-time his weakness, for, alas! the British Public have only confidence in such men as are being perpetually flaunted before their eyes by advertisement. . . .

Sir Henry Jackson was to leave the Admiralty without regret.

I have just received (21 Dec.) a letter from Jackson, perfectly delighted at getting away from the Admiralty. He tells me that he found it very nearly impossible to keep out of politics, and he was heartily sick of it and offered to go a couple of months ago. Asquith told him he thought it might shortly be advisable to have a man whose name was better known to the Public. Really one has no words to express one's contempt!

Dec. 14. . . . We have had much to think of. Following close on the heels of the Admiralty changes come those of the Government which in principle I think altogether to the good. Lloyd George certainly does not lack courage, and if it were not for his horrible past I should feel inclined to have faith in him. He certainly has managed to break down what began to appear to be an almost unbreakable barrier of tradition and he has got with him in his Government men certainly of ability, of courage. If they all confine themselves to such measures only as are necessary for prosecuting the war, I think we have cause for hope. But with a man of Lloyd George's character and with such a record behind him one cannot help fearing that the temptation to him to go into unnecessary matters may be too strong to resist.

Another excellent step is the cutting down of the Cabinet to five. That I have always advocated and stood for; but the really clever thing is *not* having the War Minister and First Lord of Admiralty in the Cabinet. By cutting them out, the War Council get *straight* at the Army Staff and Sea Lords and thereby politics are cut out as much as possible and an enormous amount of time saved. In my wildest dreams it never struck me that they would do such a thing, and I rejoice greatly. To the personalities of Government I don't pay much attention. They are now merely heads of departments, and we must hope that the best men for that work have been chosen. If they run their departments well they can do no harm, and that at least is something gained. I think I can see the line of thought that has produced these appointments—specialization in nearly every case. An admirable principle so long as they are heads of departments only. A bad one if they are members of a Government with governing powers (in the large sense) which they apparently

are not. I am delighted to think that Bonar Law is not at Admiralty. I should have hated that.

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Here in the meantime we are hammering on. I have a little operation coming up in a few days in conjunction with the Army which I hope will prove of considerable use. The Hedjaz business continues complicated, as it always must be so long as they allow so many different people to have a finger in the pie, but I see signs that the Government are coming gradually to a true appreciation of the facts, a conclusion which I think and hope I have had some share in bringing about. They at any rate are showing more signs of reason! I am sorry in this case for the authorities at home, because so many of the people out here who advise them are so apt to lose their heads and to fly off at tangents. They are getting rid of a real cool-headed man, McMahon, and I for one regret this step more than I can say, both from a personal and a public point of view. So far as the personal side of the question goes, I am losing two real good and agreeable friends, whose kindness and frank hospitality have been delightful, and however well I may happen to get on with the Wingates, I can never be on the same terms with them. . . .

A week later he was to see them off:

The McMahons took their departure two days ago, amidst universal expressions of regret. I did not really know how fond I had become of them until I realized that their departure made me feel quite lonely!

Their loss added to his depression; it was the third Christmas he was separated from those he loved, with no prospect as far as he could see of speedy reunion.

Christmas Day 1916. I can't tell you what a depressing effect Christmas has on me when I am away from the bosom of my family. The feeling of "one ought to be jolly; let us attempt to be" which pervades all men at this time, quite irrespective of their surroundings, touches the wrong chord, and so far from feeling sympathetic, makes me feel irritated.

. . . I have just had the General round to see me to wish me a merry Christmas! The farce of it all! How can any thinking or responsible being have a "merry Christmas"!

As for his New Year wishes, he could only pray for

a happier Year for all of us. The greatest blessing it can bring is Peace. Is it too optimistic to hope that it will do so? I do not think it. I believe 1917 will see the end of this horror, and surely any other must be but small in comparison. If it was not for hope, life would indeed be a blank.

The naval and military operations he had foreshadowed in his letter of December 14th were to have been the attack on El Arish on December 22nd:

The Army from the shore and the Navy from the sea. On the 20th, cavalry patrols pushing home a reconnaissance, found the enemy had gone and El Arish was entered without opposition. We had hoped to have a good coup and made and taken many prisoners! On the 23rd, however, our cavalry came up with the enemy, defeated them and took over 1,000 prisoners with very light casualties on our side. So the Naval part of the programme never came off. If you remember it was much the same at Sollum in March. However, to me there is some slight recompense in knowing how thorough were the preparations and how well my Staff have done their work. This defeat of the enemy will I sincerely hope have a good effect all down the Red Sea and help the Shereef's cause in the Hedjaz. I hope before very long to pay another visit to those parts.

Up to now he had always been living on board the *Euryalus*, as a rule berthed in Lake Timsah, with occasional visits to Port Said.

. . . I like Ismailia better, but it's not a bad thing to give the men a change. There are shops at Port Said and there are not at the other place and bluejackets, like most other people, occasionally want to do some shopping.

But when the *Euryalus* had to go for a refit, he took up his abode ashore in a villa at Ismailia, much to his satisfaction, for on board he often felt himself cramped for room.

My affairs cover such a large space of the earth that I would prefer to have a bigger room in which to expand. *All* my tables get covered with papers and my walls with maps. However, Miller is a veritable tower of strength and a splendid organizer so that he keeps me from getting the papers muddled.

The extent of his command, reaching as it did from Port Said to Singapore, was an unceasing subject of wonder to his military colleagues, who found it difficult to believe that the same man commanded in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean.

The Arabs having had a bad set-back at Yanbo he started off on January 15th on the patrol yacht *North Star* for the Red Sea, to see what could be done to help them.

At sea once more (he wrote on January 16th), and delightful weather, so I can settle down to attend to my private correspondence without the thousand and one interruptions I have to put up with when I am in harbour.

Jan. 17. H.M. Yacht "North Star." . . . To-day I am meeting some of my ships, and I hope to meet one of the Shereef's sons to-morrow with a view to discussing certain plans that I have in my head. I can get away from my headquarters to do this simply on account of Wireless Telegraphy, which practically enables me to keep in touch with my office all the time.

Jan. 20. I had quite an interesting day at Rabegh, where I have established a base. There I interviewed the Shereef's principal "General," a Syrian—very clever, an adventurer of the most cynical frankness. . . . The more one learns of this Hedjaz business, the more does one realize how intricate it is and how various people and parties are taking, or attempting to take, a part in it for many divers reasons. India, and Indian secret societies, Syrians, Turks of all parties, and I honestly believe that the Shereef himself is about the only man whose motives may be regarded as pure.

He honestly loathes the Turk and his rule and has visions (however vague) of Arabia for the Arabians, and he also has a belief in the friendship of England. The Indian Government are as usual the stumbling-block, and are showing that they still have that pusillanimity which has governed their actions ever since the war began. I have on board with me at this moment an officer of the Indian Army who is working in the Intelligence Department and who strikes one at once as being possessed of a clearness of vision and of a direct mental attitude which is very refreshing after the ridiculous self-sufficient state of mind of most of these gentry. I have been having long conversations with him and he is very interesting about India, Mahomedanism, and the Pan-Islam question. He says that the great majority of Mahomedans in India are thoroughly and perfectly loyal to the British Rule, which they recognize as being the greatest safeguard that their religion can have, but that they are being hardly tried by the Indian Government, who are frightened to death at the seditious party, will do nothing to try to put sedition down, and thereby cause those loyal people seriously to reflect whether loyalty pays!

Sunday, Jan. 21. I have been at anchor off a desert island in the Red Sea for the last twenty-four hours, and this morning I landed and inspected a heterogeneous "army" with which on Tuesday we hope to capture the Turkish town of Wej and its garrison. My one fear is that the garrison will bolt before we can capture them. We are working in conjunction with the Arabs, really an extraordinary affair. I have four ships here and some seaplanes, and I have embarked some 2,000 Arabs. In the meantime an Arab force is approaching Wej from the land side and on Tuesday morning we hope to have surrounded the place. By all the rules of the game the Turkish garrison should surrender. But if they don't I very much doubt the Arabs attacking them. However, with the ship's guns and such seamen as I can land to stiffen them, I don't expect they will hold out. I am in hopes that with this place in the hands of our Allies (!) the Arabs, the situation in the Hedjaz will be materially improved. . . . At this moment many dhows are depositing their freights of Arabs on board one of the ships, and a picturesque sight it is. But it is one of the extraordinary

offshoots of the universal war, that British men-of-war should be co-operating with Arab hordes!

Wednesday, Jan. 24. I am now on my way back to Egypt. Yesterday, with the assistance of the ship's guns, the Arabs occupied Wej, but the garrison who are (or were last night) still in the trenches have not yet surrendered. The main army (being Arab) were of course late, but to-day they will be there, and the business should be completed in a very short time. I was obliged to come away, as I could spare no more time from Egypt, and the uncertainty and unpunctuality of the Arabs made it impossible for me to stay and see the matter through. However, in my senior officer there I have every confidence—Boyle. He is a good man. . . .

Jan. 30. Ismailia. Back again from Cairo. I am glad to say that our little operation of Wej has been productive of the best results and has considerably helped forward the Shereefian cause. I lunched with Wingate, and he and the General and I had a good deal of discussion as to plans for the future. I am glad to think they are both coming rapidly round to my way of thinking on most matters which mutually concern us, and that my prognostications have generally turned out better than theirs.

He much wanted to go East again—to Mesopotamia, where, as he wrote (March 1st)

our successes at Kut are very great, and I am delighted to think that my gunboats have been a very material factor in the achievements. I wish I were there myself, but I can't get away from here.

Bagdad was captured on March 11th, and on March 14th his only regret was

that I couldn't enter Bagdad with my gunboats—I haven't yet received any details, but there must have been some splendid work during the advance up the river.

Later on he was to receive a report of the advance which filled him with enthusiasm:

The description of the gunboats pursuing the fleeing army and opening fire on them at quite close range is very dramatic and very wonderful. Certainly that campaign has been

a very brilliant one, quite unmarred by any disaster or regrettable incident since the fall of Kut this time last year.

The centre of a wide organization the whole of which was extremely active just then, it was impossible for him to absent himself.

Added to his other preoccupations was now the great and growing menace of enemy submarine warfare. On November 28th he had written:

The sinking of the *Arabia* was a dastardly act which with the case of the *Persia* are themselves sufficient without anything else to brand the Germans with infamy for ever. . . . And now I hear that the *Britannic*, a hospital ship, has been sunk. I think the whole nation must have gone mad.

The sinking of hospital ships filled him with horror and indignation.

Nov. 26. . . . Another hospital ship torpedoed by a submarine! One stands absolutely aghast. I can only hope for myself that these disgraceful incidents won't warp my judgment. At present I feel as if the whole German nation were a nest of reptiles to be treated as such. It is absolutely inconceivable.

And after the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare:

Feb. 2. . . . Germany has now thrown to the wind any semblance that she may have retained of so to speak legalized fighting and has now adopted the measures of desperation. Her forbidding the neutrals to trade in any manner with her enemies has a truly Napoleonic touch, which in my opinion is no more likely to have the effect she desires than did Napoleon's similar attempt. As a matter of fact I am not greatly perturbed by her threats even at their worst, and if even they have a greater result than I anticipate, they are not likely to finish us before they are done.

One of the many consequences of submarine warfare was that the mails run a great risk, and one can never feel sure that one's letters will reach their destination. Such is war!

This made him feel even more cut off from the outer world than he already did.

I sometimes want so dreadfully badly to know more what is going on, to be in it all more. Not so much from a professional point of view, because out here I have an enormous amount to do and the work is generally interesting, but I mean from a general point of view.

To his wife, with whom he kept up a running comment on current affairs, he lamented the fact that by the time his letters reached her the total outlook had changed. Events had indeed crowded upon one another in perfectly reckless confusion within the last few months: the end of the bloody struggle for Verdun, the entry of Roumania into the war, her defeat, the strange and to him incomprehensible events in Greece, the Central Powers' Peace Proposals, and now definite news of the U.S. break with Germany.

This contingency, long foreseen, had not struck Wemyss as an unmixed blessing. As far back as April 25th 1916 he had written:

The U.S. really does seem to have summoned courage to take a strong line. If she really does come in on our side, I think the situation will not altogether be favourable to us. Think if the Yankees have a hand in the Peace Conference!

In March an even more portentous event was to take place, the Russian Revolution.

Russia was war-weary. For over three years their armies had borne the brunt of the most shattering offensive, oft-times without ammunition or even weapons of any kind. Their last hopes had been centred on the Dardanelles expedition; with its failure these vanished, and stronger and more insistent grew their desire for peace. They were peasants, they wished to return home to their villages, to their homes and their families, to till their land. Had the Emperor

Nicholas concluded a separate peace, as he was so often so unjustly accused of wishing to do, he would probably have reigned to the end of his days, a popular monarch beloved by all. But, a man of honour, he clung with obstinate loyalty to his Allies and thus found himself in opposition to his people's wishes. These were promptly seized upon by the Revolutionary forces, which both in and outside Russia had long been striving for the overthrow of the Empire. It was in the name of God and the Czar they had for years been dragged to the war, like sheep to the shambles. Away with them therefore and with the Generals, with the officers who had led them into battle, with all those connected with this long-lasting nightmare.

The Treaty of Brest Litovsk was not, as usually asserted, the result of the Bolshevik regime, but rather was the Bolshevik regime the result of the desire for peace; without it no government could possibly maintain itself.

The enthusiasm with which this revolution was greeted by the Allies seems now incredible. That a movement started to the cry of "peace and bread," whose first manifestation was the massacre of the officers by their men, could ever have been looked upon as favourable to the allied cause, i.e. the furtherance of the war, must always be a subject of wonder and amazement. But so it was, and a whole year was to pass before the Treaty of Brest Litovsk finally dispelled their illusions.

Wemyss and his wife were not amongst those who rejoiced over the Russian Revolution; they had too many Russian friends not to be filled with apprehension as to their fate, too clear an insight of the true situation not to view it with alarm. It was one anxiety the more added to many others.

Wemyss was now Vice-Admiral; the retirement of Sir George Warrender in December had given him his step; Sir George Warrender's death a few months later caused him the sincerest sorrow:

A friend of so many years standing and a staunch one, he was an honest and brave man, with a good deal of capacity.

It was over a year since he had taken up his command and how different was the situation then to what it was now. The task then had been to defend the Canal and ward off attack; now Egypt was converted from an enemy objective into a basis of operations against the Turkish Empire. His share had been great in bringing this about and by universal accord the prestige of the Navy had never stood higher than when in his hands. A series of small operations had gradually cleared the whole Sinai Peninsula, and the attack was now slowly being pressed towards the frontier of Palestine.

By the end of March there was a good deal of fighting there, and he had hoped to pay a visit to the front and stay with General Dobell, but a fall from his horse which strained his back obliged him to remain in bed for some days. This was the first attempt to capture Gaza.

He was, however, to be present at the next one.

April 24. . . . A week at the front entailing Army rations, a very small tent, little washing except what was afforded by bathing in the sea, and a good deal of exercise in a hot sun, causing much perspiring, has done me all the good in the world, and I have returned to the comparative luxury of my headquarters all the better for the change. There were some combined operations along the coast, and I took the opportunity of going out and watching matters for myself. It was all very interesting, but matters did not turn out exactly as the General expected, though they are by no means bad. The Turk is a stubborn fighter.

This second battle for Gaza was to prove equally unsuccessful. The effect of the Russian Revolution was already beginning to make itself felt by the force of the Turkish divisions released from the Russian front.

April 29. . . . The political situation with regard to Arabia, Hedjaz, Mesopotamia and Palestine is rapidly developing, and I think on the whole favourably for us, though

in the final settlement I am inclined to think there will be clauses not entirely agreeable. But the situation is so complicated and there are so many people mixed up with it that compromises must be used.

Now that the U.S. actually have come in, I am looking round to think how they can help. I conclude that it will make our financial position absolutely secure and that there will be co-ordination and therefore greater efficiency and celerity in the ship-building, which I fancy is just now one of the vital factors in the situation. I was at Alexandria the other day and there met an American, who as usual seemed to intimate that all was over bar the cheering, now that they had taken up the cudgels. That was exactly the tone of Sam Hughes, the Canadian, when I went over there in '14. Heavens, how long ago that seems! . . . I fear Russia will be weaker than ever. Will it gradually grow into a reign of terror? How fervently I hope not, and yet how much I fear it will! Think of all our friends. What will happen to them all?

He was to hear more details from Sir Mark Sykes, who had lately come out to Cairo and who had been to Russia just before the outbreak of the Revolution.

What different opinions one hears of the Russian Revolution (Wemyss was to write on April 30th). Mark Sykes told me yesterday (and whether he really knows or not, he is no fool) that he considered the Emperor one of the few honest men in Russia, and says he abdicated only because he considered it the best way of helping the war! What a mess of it they have all made! It appears that the Navy was even more revolutionary than the Army, and that the percentage of naval officers murdered far exceeds that of the military officers.

Sir Mark Sykes was on the way to the Hedjaz, and as Wemyss was going to Jeddah to see the Grand Shereef he offered him a passage.

Before leaving, however, he had an audience with the Sultan, who all the spring had been in failing health.

May 2. I saw the Sultan yesterday and we conversed very amicably and quite agreeably for over an hour. He is very much changed since I saw him last a good many months ago now, and he gave me the impression of being a sick, tired and finished man. I am truly sorry for him, for I know that he dislikes being Sultan and only accepted from a sense of duty towards his country. He kept on assuring me that he was not conversing with me as a Sovereign to a foreign official, but as a friend and a man of the world to a friend and a man of the world. . . .

On May 15th Wemyss sailed on H.M.S. *Northbrook*, first calling at Wej to embark the Emir Feisal, the son of the Grand Shereef, whom he was taking to Jeddah.

May 18. I came away on Tuesday and am at this moment at sea, expecting shortly to arrive at Jeddah, where I am going to see the Grand Shereef. I have on board with me Mark Sykes and a Monsieur Picot, a French diplomat, who I think is one of the very nicest men I have met for a very long time. He and Mark Sykes are working together politically, a combination from which I should think the very best results may be looked for. They wanted to visit Jeddah, so, as I was also directing my steps in that direction, I offered to take them with me, an offer which of course they very gladly availed themselves of. . . . Picot is a man who has served in many countries, Petersburg, London, Pekin, Copenhagen, Syria, etc., and has much to say and talk about. He is not at all optimistic about Russia and is particularly shocked at the manner in which the Russian diplomats all the world over have received the Revolution. Iswolsky particularly seems to have incurred his contempt. He does not believe in the possibility of a stable Russian republic and thinks that sooner or later there must be a counter-revolution in favour of one of the Imperial family. . . .

May 19. H.M.S. "*Northbrook*." We arrived at Jeddah last night and this morning I went ashore to see the Grand Shereef. Such a nice old man, with a charming twinkle in his eye. The whole episode was interesting and characteristic. I was met at the landing-stage by our Consul Wilson belonging to the Sudanese Army and an Arab guard of honour—

very ragged but fine-looking men. On horseback we rode through the bazaars to the house where the Shereef is living, escorted by another guard of Arabs who cleared the way through the crowded streets. Such a motley crowd, quite beyond my powers to describe, all very curious but very dignified and quiet. Arrived at the Shereefian residence, it was exactly like a scene out of the "Arabian Nights." The halls were crowded with guards, hangers-on, men lying about fast asleep in every sort of attitude—a strange mixture of pomp and *laissez aller*. Here I was met by one of the old man's sons—a fine-looking fellow who had been away for the last seventeen months waging war, such as it is, against the Turk, and then into a large room where the Shereef himself in a very simple white robe and a turban of many colours, green predominating, was waiting by himself to receive me. A typical room—very large and high with white-washed walls, a low divan running all round, a very beautiful carpet and a truly appalling coloured glass chandelier and two horrible consoles of the worst and ugliest boarding-house type. It had evidently been arranged that only he and Wilson and myself and my Staff were to be present, but curiosity and lack of discipline got the best of it, and gradually the room filled up with all sorts and kinds of followers. The Shereef sat cross-legged on a divan, with me on his right and Wilson on his left, the remainder of the company seated at intervals down the room. The usual compliments and set speeches, and then the old man, evidently very pleased with himself, with us and the whole situation, began telling stories, interpreted word for word by his Foreign Minister (*sic!*). Stories of a genial and broad nature at which he himself laughed excessively, a laughter in which I heartily joined, but more I must confess at the whole situation than at the stories themselves. The whole thing was a strange mixture of pomp and slovenliness, dignity and burlesque, which was extremely odd and unlike anything I had ever seen before. Very bitter coffee, cigarettes and strange jokes brought the convivial part of the meeting to an end and when I rose to take my leave, he once again assumed a royal dignity. After my departure and a discreet interval Mark Sykes and Monsieur Picot had an interview with him.

May 21. H.M.S. "Northbrook." Yesterday the Shereef returned my visit and he was on board three hours. We received him with all honours, and the rest of the time was taken up with political conversations, which, after all, was the principal object of our visit. Altogether our time has not been wasted and I think good results have been obtained.

In the course of conversation last night, Mr. Picot, who was then at the Embassy in London and in charge of the matter on the French side, told me that during last autumn, whilst the affairs of the Hedjaz were so complicated, it was my telegrams that carried most weight and eventually turned the situation. I am very pleased to know this, because I never for one instant wavered in my ideas, and kept the Admiralty well informed of them. I never knew how far they (my telegrams) got and whether the F.O. saw them all. Altogether it is satisfactory as far as I am concerned. Picot seems to me one of the most reasonable and broad-minded Frenchmen I have yet come across to do business with, and the result of course is that work goes much quicker and more smoothly with him. . . . We left Jeddah last night and are now on our way to Aden, where I shall find much to occupy me.

Three days at Aden, where

I got through a deal of work, and quite satisfactorily. There were many questions to be cleared up and the presence of Mark Sykes and M. Picot considerably helped and made settlement politically easy. The weather hot and damp, but I am very pleased to find that none of my people there were any the worse in health from it. . . . So far as the enemy is concerned, the situation is precisely the same as it was a year ago, which irritates me beyond measure, but since it is entirely beyond my sphere I can do nothing at all.

A visit to Djibouti:

The Head Quarters of French Somaliland it was even hotter than at Aden, but not so damp. I had called in there more as a matter of politeness than anything else, to make the acquaintance of the Governor, but there also we were able to help matters along, so that my fortnight's cruise has by no means been unprofitable.

It proved to be his last cruise in the Red Sea, for though he did not know it then, his time in Egypt was drawing to a close.

In the Mediterranean the enemy submarine campaign had been operating on the trade routes with increasing success, and ever since the declaration on February 1st 1917 of unrestricted submarine war, an endless tale of transports, hospital ships, and allied shipping of every kind torpedoed without warning bore witness not only to the enemy's barbarity but also to the want of preparation on the part of the Allies for a mode of warfare never hitherto contemplated.

The difficulties besetting them in the Mediterranean had been greatly enhanced by the absence of any central authority for dealing with this menace.

Arbitrarily divided into three zones of control allotted to England, France, and Italy, this plan, probably the best which could be devised under the circumstances, had so far proved unsatisfactory on account of want of control and co-operation and when in February and March the sinkings of Allied shipping in the Mediterranean rose to 101,000 and 72,000 tons respectively, it was felt that more strenuous and energetic means would have to be adopted.

This had to be done by consent of the three Powers concerned, and the result was the calling of a Conference of inter-Allied Admirals, which met at Corfu on April 27th, and after many discussions recommended the creation of a central authority at Malta to have charge of all arrangements regarding routes, escorts, and patrols throughout the whole Mediterranean.

But when it came to choosing the officer for this appointment, great divergencies arose, for while the Admiralty desired he should be British the French clung with equal insistence to his being of their own nationality. After many negotiations and mutual concessions it was finally settled that a British Vice-Admiral should be appointed C.-in-C.

of the British Naval Forces in the Mediterranean and head of the organization at Malta for the general direction of routes, but, so as not to appear to question French supremacy, he was to fly his flag ashore.

From the very outset Wemyss had realized all the menace of the submarine. While still in the Channel Patrol, he had elaborated an anti-submarine scheme, to which, however, the Admiralty had paid but little attention. Now, disturbed at the large number of vessels sunk and at the inadequacy of the steps taken, he caused his Chief of the Staff, Captain Burmester, and Commander Godfrey to produce an exhaustive plan for anti-submarine measures in the Mediterranean, with a single control at Malta, evasive routes, through convoys, increased escorts, a better Otranto Barrage with an adequate Staff at headquarters and a British Admiral. This scheme it was which now had been virtually accepted, and it was therefore but natural that the appointment should be offered him.

June 12. Ismailia. . . . Surprising developments are occurring to me personally. They want me to go as C.-in-C. Mediterranean, an office they mean to re-institute. I shall be very sorry from a professional point of view to leave here, where the work has been so interesting, and of course it is a much more difficult business I am going to, but it's a great compliment to me for it is an enormous affair I am going to take up and will require an enormous amount of organization.

Ever since the earliest days in his naval career the height of his ambition had been to become C.-in-C. Mediterranean; he had attained it. Yet he was loath to leave Egypt, which for so long had cast a spell on him. He regretted the yellow desert and blue skies, the many friends he had made, his work so absorbing and fruitful, though as to what had been his principal preoccupation, the Arab Revolt, there is nothing more I can do in Arabia just at present,

for we have successfully driven the enemy from all their coastal strongholds—captured them all and are holding them—so that the venue of operations has retired beyond the reach of my guns.

And yet to him the most surprising incident of the Arab campaign was still to come. A short time before his departure he had gone with his Staff to meet General Allenby, sent to relieve General Murray who had been recalled as a result of the unsuccessful Gaza battles. At Ismailia station Captain Burmester was accosted by what he first took to be an Arab, but who turned out to be Lawrence—Lawrence who they had neither seen nor heard of since he had, after their journey to Khartoum, vanished alone into the desert, and who now announced that he had captured the town of Akaba and had with him 700 prisoners whom he did not know how to dispose of! !—a feat so amazing that Wemyss felt not enough could be done. He immediately ordered the *Dufferin* to be loaded up with food and stores and sent to Akaba, while the Flagship *Euryalus* followed soon after to impress the native mind.

This was the last service he was to render the Arab cause.

When during the Peace Conference Emir Feisal and General Botha, meeting at luncheon at the Hôtel Majestic, fell to discussing guerrilla warfare, the latter expressed his astonishment at the Arabs being successful where the Boers had failed.

“Ah” said the Emir, “that was because you had not Admiral Wemyss and his ships to help you.”

But no testimony can outweigh that of Colonel Lawrence.

Admiral Wemyss was in glorious contrast to the soldiers—no jealousy, no stupidity, no laziness; he was as keen to help as any two-year-old. His support in the mixed councils and conferences was hearteningly useful. That was the main benefit he did us.

In practical affairs he did all the Navy can do on the

land. In the first days of the Revolt he came to Jeddah to lend his personal support to King Hussein and to confirm what Boyle had done. The two years of steady help we received from the S.N.O. Red Sea was, of course, the Admiral's work.

When Rabegh grew dangerous, he visited the place, and stripped his ships of every maxim they could spare, about 20, I think, to strengthen the Arab defences. He took me over to Khartoum to talk over the problem with Wingate.

When we took Akaba, we were in a very dangerous state. I came to Ismailia and appealed to Wemyss in person. He instantly sent the *Dufferin* there with money and stores. She confirmed the weakness of the Arab forces, and the Admiral then sent his flagship, the *Euryalus*, to lie off the village as guard-ship for weeks. She was a four-funnelled boat, and as such made an indelible impression on tribal opinion. Obviously, the more funnels the greater the ship. When the crisis had passed, the *Euryalus* was, of course, withdrawn; but he replaced her by the *Humber* as permanent guard-ship (under Captain, now Admiral, Snagge). This was his last friendliness to us: immediately afterwards he was appointed to London.

The Red Sea patrol-ships were the fairy-godmothers of the Revolt. They carried our food, our arms, our ammunition, our stores, our animals. They built our piers, armed our defences, served as our coast artillery, lent us seaplanes, provided all our wireless communication, landed landing parties, mended and made everything. I couldn't spend the time writing down a tenth of their services. That's what I meant by saying, at the beginning, that the Admiral was hearteningly useful. His support, in the high place, made all the naval ships our active helpers.

By the Army too Wemyss was regretted. General Sir Philip Chetwode, then in command, writing to say good-bye on July 23rd, told him:

How extremely grateful this force has been to you and the Senior Service for all that you have done for us! I am sure we both wish there had been more to do together; but we never asked for Naval assistance in any form without

getting it immediately and in fullest measure, whether in the way of fighting co-operation, as in the battle of Gaza, or in the matter of the maintenance of the Army, as at El Arish and Deir el Belah. We shall not forget that during the whole of the early period at El Arish the only reserve of stores and supplies that the Army had, was brought by sea, and Naval assistance has been no less valuable since the establishment of the port of Deir el Belah.

The Canal Company also deplored the loss of one with whom their relations had been so exceptionally close and cordial, while with Comte and Comtesse de Serrionne he had formed a friendship which was to prove lasting. It was in the Canal Company's yacht the *Aigrette* that he finally left Ismailia to embark at Port Said on July 22nd on H.M.S. *Weymouth*, cheered by the *Euryalus* and amidst universal regret.

CHAPTER XII

ADMIRALTY AND THE ARMISTICE

IT is given to few, when in their prime, to realize the dreams of youth. Wemyss deemed himself among these fortunate exceptions when on leaving Port Said he steamed across the Mediterranean, the scene of his future activities. Even the unforeseen and difficult conditions under which he was taking up his command were but an added incentive to his energies, his ingenuity, his powers of organization for which in anticipation of much happy and fruitful collaboration he was taking his whole Staff with him.

Egypt remains under my command (he wrote to his wife, July 4th), and they are sending out a Rear-Admiral to be here, of course under me as C.-in-C. For some reasons I am sorry to give up this station, but I cannot help being pleased at the new job. It is the biggest thing there is after C.-in-C. Grand Fleet, and will mean an immense amount of work, since I shall have to organize the whole thing and I shall have to keep sweet with the French, not that the difficulties will, I think, prove very great. And then there is the possibility of our being together again—which is glorious. I should get you over from Taranto to Malta in a fast man-of-war, so that there would be no danger.

His family were awaiting him in Paris, where he arrived on July 26th; the unutterable happiness of such a meeting can be imagined; he had not seen his little girl since the beginning of the war. Together they rejoiced over the pleasant prospect unfolding itself before them; endless were their plans for the future. The next day he continued his journey to London, from where he wrote two days later:

A long day at Admiralty, on the whole very satisfactory and everybody helpful—my proposals have been accepted *en bloc*. I can see that they are alarmed that the French authorities may be jealous of my position, but I assured them I could and would work harmoniously with them. . . .

His wife did not hear from him again till his return a week later, when he announced that all was changed, and that instead of going as C.-in-C. Mediterranean, he had accepted the post of Second Sea Lord. She was in despair; it was not only the abandonment of long-cherished hopes on the very eve of fulfilment, the relinquishment of an appointment more important, more advantageous, and more congenial in every way for one in all respects inferior, but above all she dreaded the Admiralty, which during the war had proved the grave of so many reputations, and the spirit of intrigue which ever since Fisher's reign had clung to its walls and with which she full well knew he was so unfitted to deal. She therefore besought him to refuse—but in vain! He was adamant. He realized the sacrifice it entailed, he bitterly regretted his hopes being dashed to the ground, but if it was thought he could serve his country better as Second Sea Lord he was ready to do so. With the same abnegation as he had in the Dardanelles given up the command to de Robeck, so he was content to act now. His only thought was for the general good and never for himself.

There was nothing more to be said, but it was with a heavy heart and dark foreboding that she saw him take up his new appointment.

*When I went to the Admiralty in September 1917 as Deputy First Sea Lord the Board had already been increased by the members who were designated Deputy and Assistant Chiefs of the Naval Staff respectively. The Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff's duties were entirely connected with Anti-Submarine War, but those of the Deputy Chief were not so well defined, and he functioned in fact as the Assistant of the First Sea Lord and C.N.S. and as a sort of Director of Movement. Everything to do with the war—beyond the anti-submarine campaign—went through his hands.

The First Lord's original idea had been that I should be Second Sea Lord, but that the traditional duties of that

office should be somewhat modified, so as to allow me to take up Staff Duties. The reason for this was that until now, should the First Sea Lord for any reason be absent from the Admiralty, the whole of the burden and responsibility of the war devolved automatically on the Second Sea Lord, whose duties in connection with the personnel did not allow him sufficient time to study Staff matters. Consequently he (the Second Sea Lord) might find himself called upon at any moment to give decisions on matters with which he could not possibly be familiar. On considering the situation I advised the First Lord that it would be better not to interfere with the duties of the Second Sea Lord, which were so well understood on all sides, and which required the full attention of one man, but appoint me as additional with my duties entirely confined to Staff work, and that an officer should be appointed as Second Sea Lord who would be junior to me. By this means the conduct of the war would, in the absence of the First Sea Lord, automatically fall into my hands.

This arrangement was agreed to and carried out.

Sir Eric Geddes, the First Lord, had only just taken up the appointment in succession to Sir E. Carson. Probably no two men were ever more unlike each other than he and Wemyss, and yet no two men ever worked better or more successfully together—both animated by the same spirit of patriotism, the same single-minded desire to win the war.

His first weeks in London were pleasant enough. The stimulation caused by taking up a new appointment, the pleasure after such a long time of seeing his friends and relations again, made him forget his disappointment, and when his wife returned from Switzerland, whither she had gone to collect her scattered belongings, they settled down in a house in Cumberland Place.

But it was not long before he began to realize how completely out of touch he was with the spirit then pervading the Admiralty, which was purely defensive, whilst his was entirely offensive. To leave the initiative to the enemy, as

we were doing, he deemed a fatal mistake, and unless we were ready to undertake some bold offensive he believed there was every chance of our losing the war. It was to this end that he persuaded Admiral Keyes to leave the Grand Fleet and become the Director of the newly formed Plans Division at the Admiralty.

He himself had given up the C.-in-C.-ship of the Mediterranean to bring his experience, so much more varied than that of most officers, to help the situation, but he was beginning to fear he had done so in vain.

To dispel the pall of fatalistic gloom which seemed to envelop the Admiralty appeared as impossible as to try and rouse them to accept new ideas.

The arrangement from which the First Lord had hoped so much did not work satisfactorily, because

*Sir John Jellicoe could never be brought to see the utility of it. My presence, I am afraid, in no way helped to lessen the burden on his shoulders, simply because he refused to delegate to me any responsibility. Some time in December I had a conversation with him and told him that I feared I was not of as much assistance to him as I had hoped to be. I pointed out to him that he was giving me no responsibilities and that as matters stood I was merely giving an extra opinion on dockets which could well be dispensed with, and I asked him directly whether he trusted me or not.

His reply was to the effect that he entirely trusted me, but that he could see no way towards shifting any of his responsibilities on to me, since such would not be legal. My reply was that it was, legally, a matter for the First Lord, and that if he chose to appoint certain duties to me, the procedure would be constitutionally correct. Sir John did not agree with me and the matter dropped for the time; but I seriously began to reconsider my position, and to wonder whether it was either right or useful that I should remain under such circumstances. I knew that to throw up my appointment would cause more difficulties.

The Admiralty was at that time being strongly attacked by the Press, and Wemyss felt that, were he to send in his resignation, it might more likely than not be adding fuel to the flame.

*I was slowly making up my mind as to what course to pursue when certain circumstances occurred which brought matters to a crisis.

The chief point to which I had turned my attention was Dover, where I formed the opinion that it was possible to do more than was being done towards stopping the enemy submarines from passing through. Admiral Keyes, whom I had brought to the Admiralty (much against his will) from the Grand Fleet as Director of the newly formed Plans Division, was in agreement with me and many were the hours which we spent together in studying the situation.

The Admiral in command of Dover was Sir R. Bacon, an extraordinarily clever man of an inventive turn. In my judgment he turned his attention too much towards the military situation in devising means for landing heavy artillery, etc., and not enough towards stopping the passage of the submarines.

The Intelligence Department satisfactorily proved to me that the enemy did pass the Straits successfully and almost unchallenged. Sir R. Bacon on the other hand maintained that they did not, that his system of nets was satisfactory and that the proof of this lay in the fact that no ship had ever been torpedoed in his area. He brushed aside as puerile my contention that naturally the enemy left alone an area that he wished to pass unmolested and took other areas for his nefarious activities. Towards the end of December I brought the subject very insistently before both the First Lord and the First Sea Lord, and my contention was that Bacon was not being successful in his anti-submarine measures, that we should leave no stone unturned to try and stop the passage of these craft and that we had better try somebody else and go on changing until we found somebody who could.

Jellicoe maintained that Bacon was the best man we had for the job and should remain. I on the other hand maintained that he was not. The interview at which all this happened took place in the First Lord's room, and I came away

feeling that matters could not go on in this manner. The First Lord was in the disagreeable position of finding his two principal technical advisers in direct opposition to each other on a matter which was essentially the First Sea Lord's responsibility whilst he, I knew, agreed with me, the junior.

This circumstance determined me to resign, and I was considering how to do so with as little derangement and damage to the Admiralty prestige as possible when on the evening of 22nd December, whilst dining alone with my wife, I received a message from the First Lord asking me if I would go and talk to him after dinner.

It was England's darkest hour: the submarine campaign was undefeated, the defensive measures had so far apparently failed, and though the sinkings of ships had of late been less than in the spring and early summer, it was no secret that a great recrudescence of submarine activity was shortly to be expected. So long as there was, as then, an excess of British shipping losses over deliveries, an excess of German submarine deliveries over losses, our defeat could only be a question of time.

When he arrived the First Lord told him

*that he had made up his mind to get rid of Jellicoe, and asked me if I were prepared to take his place. I certainly did not wish to, and I had some doubts as to whether I should be able successfully to grapple with the enormous problems that confronted the First Sea Lord, but the last three years had taught me a good deal of self-confidence, and I also felt that I at any rate would bring to the office a wider outlook than it had before had. As on a former occasion I therefore dealt as freely and openly as possible with the First Lord—told him what points I considered were in favour of accepting and what I considered were my disabilities. He replied that he had been studying me for the last three months and that in his opinion I was the best man. On this I accepted, believing that under the circumstances it was my duty, but by no manner of means pleased at my sudden elevation.

The First Lord asked me to say nothing at the present because he had first of all to consult the King and the Prime Minister and because he wished to choose the psychological moment for making the announcement to Jellicoe.

This he did on the afternoon of Dec. 24th by letter.

Geddes was much blamed at the time for the so-called brutal suddenness with which he dismissed Jellicoe, but it was a matter which could only come disagreeably to the latter, however it was put, and I know that Geddes, hating the job, did it in a manner which, sudden though it was, he considered the best for him and all others concerned.

Wemyss' position was painful in the extreme. All the Sea Lords came to him protesting violently against the treatment meted out to Admiral Jellicoe, who, they said, had been "kicked out without warning."

The situation was, however, rendered easier by the latter, who, no doubt realizing how little Wemyss himself was responsible for his supersession, never showed him the smallest resentment, both he and Lady Jellicoe going out of their way to make the change less difficult, and they remained friends to the end.

The question of the Dover Patrol, the cause of the whole crisis, received a prompt solution. Wemyss was appointed First Sea Lord on December 27th 1917. That same day Admiral Bacon was recalled and Admiral Keyes installed in his stead, with orders to put into execution those plans which Wemyss and he had so often considered together, while he took with him as his Chief of the Staff Commodore Hon. A. Boyle.

Wemyss paid a hurried visit with the First Lord to Edinburgh to meet Admiral Beatty, C.-in-C. Grand Fleet, to discuss the general situation. Admiral Beatty and Admiral Jellicoe had not been on cordial terms since the battle of Jutland, so that a result of the change was to render the

relations between the Admiralty and the Grand Fleet closer and better than they had been before.

*The trouble (with the Sea Lords) soon passed over, and we all settled down harmoniously to work. Admiral Hope† came as my Deputy and as one of the Board, and Fremantle‡ was chosen to take Admiral Oliver's place as Deputy First Sea Lord. Admiral Duff,§ who had talked of resigning, was eventually persuaded to remain on.

It was after consultation with Beatty that Fremantle was appointed to take Oliver's place, the latter taking the command of one of the Squadrons of Battle Cruisers. Fremantle was a decided success. Our mining operations now took an organized form whereas before they had been of a somewhat haphazard character. Plans were made for a series of mine-laying operations in which the Grand Fleet was consulted and the *entente* was excellent.

Wemyss was now installed as First Sea Lord, an appointment he had assuredly neither wished nor sought for. His desire was far more for an active command, for he loathed office work, and his response to the many congratulations which poured down upon him was lukewarm indeed. To Admiral Calthorpe, who had taken his place in Malta, he wrote (December 31st 1917):

People write and congratulate me, but you—more than most people—will easily understand that it is hardly a question of congratulations, but rather one of condolences. However, in these damnable times of war one can only do what one is told and not what one likes. If the Service is content with my appointment, then I am content to do my best in it. The results we can only wait for.

And yet he was to succeed there where others had failed.

He had brought to his position quite exceptional qualifications, for added to his varied war experiences he was a man of the world, having mingled freely from his earliest youth with every section of society, both English and foreign, and

* Memoirs.

† Admiral Sir George Hope.

‡ Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle.

§ Admiral Sir A. Duff.

had consequently acquired a far broader outlook than most; while for the Admiralty he had two valuable assets, both of a negative character: he had never previously held an Admiralty appointment, so that, untrammelled by tradition or routine, he was able to view matters objectively, nor had he ever specialized in any branch; indeed technicalities, as he openly confessed, bored him. Now, experts rarely possess the gift of leadership, the fact of being completely absorbed in one subject preventing their co-ordinating the whole. But what above all was to prove the secret of his success was that while all his predecessors had been of the old school, he was completely modern in his ideas and outlook. They had all, and none more so than Lord Fisher, clung to their authority; brought up to rely upon themselves and themselves alone, before wireless and rapid communication had revolutionized the Navy, they had all been distrustful of delegating responsibility to others, so that the newly formed War Staff had practically remained a dead letter.

Wemyss was the first to understand and to practise

*“that greatest of modern requirements, organized co-operation—the welding together into a harmonious whole of the humblest as well as of the greatest effort, i.e. what is commonly called team-work.”

† Whatever may have been the case in carrying out my duties, I found no difficulty in laying out my plans. The first thing to be done was to put the Staff on a working basis and by distributing work and responsibility to engender confidence. I gave Admiral Fremantle the conduct of affairs in the North Sea and caused him to work in close touch with the C.-in-C.—Admiral Duff as before had the conduct of the anti-submarine campaign, and to Admiral Hope I confided the management of things abroad.

It is impossible in Naval warfare to draw any line of demarcation between any areas, but that was the arrangement, and in order that there should be no working in watertight compartments and no overlapping, I instituted regular and

* “The Navy in the Dardanelles,” p. 277.

† Memoirs.

formal Staff Meetings which were held every morning at 9.30, when the general situation was discussed, and when plans and operations were planned in outline. The results were eminently satisfactory and I can recall no instance when there was any friction. The Staff Lords and their various Directors of Divisions very soon realized that I trusted them and expected them to assume responsibility, and they "played up" accordingly. I myself avoided all detail. The results were better and quicker even than I had hoped for, and decisions were now reached quickly and with everybody's knowledge, whereas before the rage for secrecy had resulted in confusion, overlapping and clumsy work.

Confidence and cheerfulness now took the place of uncertainty and gloom at the Admiralty, and I had not been seated many weeks in the First Sea Lord's chair before I had the pleasure of knowing that the machine was running more smoothly and efficiently than before.

The war had the effect of tiring out even some of those men whose constitutions and nerves were of iron, and the only chance of a man in a high position not being worn out before his time lay in his only giving attention to policy and leaving details to others. This is what Jellicoe had never been able to bring himself to do. His knowledge of material, however, had stood his successor in good stead, and I found at hand mines, vessels, depth charges, etc., which only required to be put to a proper use.

There was in the Admiralty an unfortunate Defensive spirit. To counter the submarine menace Defence only had been used. To me it appeared absolutely necessary that the tables must be turned and that we must hunt the enemy submarines instead of their hunting us.

Admiral Duff and Captain Fisher were full of the offensive spirit, but their hands had been tied by the moral atmosphere of Defence which had imperceptibly crept into the Admiralty. Hunting squadrons were organized, deep mine-fields and patrols instituted, and if some of the earlier operations did not meet with the success which was expected of them, they raised the spirit of the men who organized and planned them and of those admirable junior officers who carried them out, and egged them on to further exertions.

According to those who worked with him

*his method was to deal directly and by personal conversation with other members of the Board, with Directors of the Divisions of the War Staff, and in the same way at meetings of the War Cabinet. . . . He was not a "paper" man and never allowed himself to be delayed or harassed by documents; the result was that he kept his mind clear for essentials, was always accessible and always cheerful, and inspired at all times confidence and optimism.

He was an extremely good judge of men and their capacity; he realized that action depended on men not on papers, and he utilized them and trusted them according to their qualifications. His qualities as a "man of the world" gave him a wide view and also made him quite fearless of any man or any situation. He seemed to me always ready for action and to be prepared to take charge of the situation whatever it might be. I do not think that anything would have daunted him. . . . The success of the Admiralty management in 1918 is the best tribute to his work there and of his ability for "team-work."

His time was much taken up with inter-Allied Naval War Councils, which met sometimes in London, sometimes in Paris. A warm friendship dating from Mudros days united him to Admiral de Bon, the Chief of the French Naval Staff, a friendship which, smoothing away any differences inevitably arising from time to time, caused the English and French Navies to work together in closest collaboration and harmony to the end of the war and all through the peace negotiations. With Admiral Sims, the U.S. representative, he soon established excellent relations, for, taking a wide view himself, he was very quick to see the point of view of others and very ready to meet them.

In February Sir Eric Geddes departed for a tour of inspection in the Mediterranean, where matters were not going well, and during the three weeks he was away the

* Admiral Manisty to Lady Wester Wernys.

entire responsibility of the Admiralty rested on Wemyss' shoulders.

The bombardment of Yarmouth by enemy destroyers (January 14th 1918) he had not treated seriously, and the raid on Dover on February 15th, where a trawler and seven drifters were sunk, though a matter of deep regret, he considered but one of the inevitable incidents of war, while fears of invasion never troubled him; he had had the unique experience of landing an army and of evacuating that same army and knew the difficulties and dangers such an operation entailed.

Far different, however, was the menace of the submarine; through all those gloomy months of the beginning of that year the sinkings continued unabated, and as week after week our losses mounted up, even his optimism began to waver. Though outwardly his bearing was as confident as ever, his smile as radiant, inwardly he was wondering how long we could possibly hold out—the country did not know, nor indeed was ever to know, what a very slender margin had stood between it and surrender or starvation.

It was a race between our shipping losses and enemy submarine losses, a race we were straining every nerve to win, and, as he was obliged to confess,

*at this stage of the war one feels inclined like a drowning man to clutch at any and every proposal that holds out the slightest chance of being successful.

At the beginning of January the Commander-in-Chief Grand Fleet declared that the German battle cruiser fleet being now definitely more formidable than ours, while large contingents of our naval forces were absorbed in the duties of the anti-submarine campaign, he could no longer be certain of meeting the German Fleet on terms of equality and that therefore in his opinion it was inadvisable to

* To Admiral Beatty.

provoke a fleet action even should the opportunity arise, an opinion fully endorsed by the Admiralty.

Wemyss' whole energy was concentrated on the new anti-submarine campaign, of which Dover was the keystone.

*If only we could make the Straits impassable for the enemy our difficulties would be well on the way of being solved.

Admiral Keyes with Commodore A. Boyle had built up an admirable staff organization, where each man had his work to do and did it admirably.

Mines were poured into Dover and were laid with the idea of hermetically sealing the Straits. I must confess I never felt sure of our ability to do this. But I was determined to try and in the end we *did* succeed, for we had ample proof that the enemy got shyer and shyer of attempting to force the passage, and eventually gave it up altogether.

The blocking of Zeebrugge and Ostend was but a part of the whole scheme. The idea was not new and had often been mooted; indeed, Sir R. Bacon has said in his memoirs that he turned his plans over to Admiral Keyes. I gave Admiral Keyes a free hand and he went on with his preparations and plans, and eventually laid them before me.

There now arose one of those questions of constitutional authority which must ever arise when there exists a Board in lieu of a single man.

There had been much complaint on the part of some former members of the Board as to the manner in which they had been kept in entire ignorance of the proposals for the Gallipoli Campaign, claiming that as members of a corporate body they shared the responsibility for the Naval part of that—and other—operations. This question of responsibility had been the subject of much discussion between the First Lord and myself, and he laid down the principle that for day-to-day operations at any rate, the Staff Lords only should be responsible, a procedure in which all the Naval members of the Board had acquiesced and which had temporarily at any rate satisfied me. But this question of an attack on Zeebrugge and Ostend was not a day-to-day operation, and moreover was one which if not successful

would bring a great deal of criticism on to the Admiralty. I accordingly made up my mind to let my colleagues into the secret which I was trying to keep hard from everyone. At a meeting of the Naval Lords in my room I put forward to them what it was proposed to do, and Admiral Keyes unfolded his detailed plan. Luckily there was no dissentient voice and I therefore was spared the difficulty of carrying out this operation against their wishes which I had made up my mind to do in case of their disapproval.

Deeply engraved in his mind was the recollection of how the Dardanelles campaign had been marred by the Admiralty's want of assistance, directions, and sympathy; he was resolved that in this case every help that could be should be given. Frequent conferences with Admiral Keyes, visits to Dover—he omitted nothing, while often personally intervening to smooth away difficulties.

Ubiquitous as ever, all through February the absence of the First Lord had kept him in London, but on March 3rd he was in Dover, on the 5th and 6th at Wemyss, conferring with the C.-in-C. on board the *Queen Elizabeth* and inspecting anti-submarine experimental stations; on the 9th, at Portland, hunting submarines on a trawler and witnessing experiments; while on the 23rd he went over to Ireland to Queenstown to visit the American ships, meeting with an enthusiastic reception.

Two days previously, on March 21st, the enemy had launched their great offensive. On that morning Wemyss, heartened by the news of a successful naval action before Dunkirk, where two German destroyers had been sunk, had gone down to Deal to inspect the special battalions being prepared for the Zeebrugge and Ostend attacks—all picked men, volunteers who knew they were engaged on a most dangerous enterprise though not of what nature, for the greatest secrecy was observed. It was a beautiful spring day—the countryside in all its glory—and as he, accompanied on this occasion by his wife and General Mercer commanding

the Marines, motored through the peaceful lanes of Kent it seemed almost impossible to conjure up the vision of the scenes of bloodshed being enacted not so very far away.

It was some days before the gravity of the situation was realized, at all events by the public; on the 23rd the War Office was still declaring they were quite content with the offensive; three days later, however, anxiety began to be general, and the Ministers panic-stricken. As long ago as December, when the question of releasing troops from home for the Western Front had been brought up, Wemyss, taking upon himself far greater responsibility than any of his predecessors, had advised the Cabinet to take the risk of diminishing the troops in England for home defence, convinced as he was that the Navy would suffice for resisting invasion. This proposal, however, was not reflected in any appreciable reduction of our Home Defence, because Mr. Lloyd George would not let young men be sent over to France to be "butchered by Haig," while Lord French refused to agree to the removal of a single man from England. Now in their dismay they wanted to denude the Fleet of the Marines, to send them to the Front, a project Wemyss stoutly and successfully resisted:

*I had a regular stand-up fight against the politicians and the Army at the War Cabinet yesterday—they actually suggested—they almost demanded—that the ships of the Grand Fleet should be reduced in the number of Marines, in order to strengthen some of the battalions abroad. I flatly refused to countenance any such suggestion, and I think they were rather surprised and even hurt at the *non possumus* attitude which I took up. The soldiers actually put on a sort of aggrieved air as though we were not playing the game!

He succeeded, however, in getting General Wilson to see reason by explaining that

to deprive a ship of any percentage, however small, of her

* To Admiral Beatty.

highly trained men—which is what all the Marines are—decreases her efficiency to a very high degree, to a degree which I, responsible as I am for the efficiency of the Fleet, cannot under any circumstances be justified in doing.

This he hoped would result, in that

we shall have no more attacks from the soldiers; though with the politicians and their ignorance of affairs Naval and their short-sightedness as to the events of the future, one never can tell what they may do . . . it is a subject on which I will hear nothing more and should they—which of course they cannot—insist on it, they will have to do without me.

During all this time preparations for the forthcoming attack on the Belgian bases were being pushed on with the utmost zeal and in the greatest secrecy.

*I have never got over the surprise that I had at the success which attended our efforts in keeping the expedition secret. Hundreds of people had to know of it because of the extensive preparations, and yet the Press never got an inkling of the proposal. Ships were prepared in the dockyards and it was quite impossible to keep them out of sight. The Marine Battalion was specially trained at Deal; in fact, had any busybody thought of what it all meant and had he set the whisper starting, there was no possibility of keeping the matter quiet.

In connection with secrecy of movement an unimportant incident occurred which goes far to prove how utterly impossible it is in these days of rapid communication to ensure secrecy.

The whole flotilla organized for the attack on Zeebrugge were collected together in the Thames at the point from which they were to start. I was anxious to see them: to see the preparations, to see the officers and men and to wish them God-speed. It was naturally of importance that my visit should not be known, for that very fact might give a clue to the near approach of the operation. I accordingly told my Staff I was going down to Harwich to see Commodore Tyrwhitt and look at some new buildings that were

being erected there and gave orders that my car should meet a train which arrived from Harwich in the evening. I went to Harwich and when there suddenly asked the Commodore if he could send me round to Sheerness in a destroyer. Luckily he was able to do so without any trouble, and it was not until we had entered the mouth of the Thames that I told the Captain to take me to the Swin (where the Flotilla was lying) instead of to Sheerness. Having seen all I wanted to see, I proceeded to Sheerness, and asked the Admiral there to telephone to London to order my car to meet me at Charing Cross instead of Liverpool Street Station. The car was there on my arrival, and when I reached the Admiralty I casually remarked to Captain Marriott that he had received the telephone message in time to make the new arrangements. To my surprise he told me that he had been expecting a change of plans because early in the afternoon he had received information that I was afloat in the Thames, not from Harwich but from Sheerness!

So great was the secrecy maintained that Wemyss had insisted that even the Prime Minister should not be told of the attack, until the ships were actually on the other side. Though warned that this would probably cause offence, he was intractable when it came to men's lives being at stake—ministerial indiscretions had more than once been the source of disaster.

The expedition started on April 11th, but when only 16 miles from Zeebrugge Mole the wind changed and they had to turn back on account of the smoke-screens, while three days later another attempt was foiled by a rising wind and sea. It was finally on April 22–23rd that the attack was delivered, and as Wemyss wrote:

*Must for all times live as an example not only of gallantry but of a perfectly planned and carried out operation. It is the only example of a successful blocking expedition.

The attempt on Ostend, which had failed, on April 22–23rd was carried out with success on May 9–10th.

No one had rejoiced more than Wemyss over an achievement in which he had had so great a part; but when he learnt the casualties he was appalled; he wondered how far such losses were justified, probably the only man in England that day who did, for popular enthusiasm was unbounded over this great exploit, which regained for the Navy that popularity its long period of supposed inactivity had caused it to lose.

Congratulations streamed in from every side—none warmer than from Admiral Beatty, who wrote saying how great a matter of particular gratification it must be to Wemyss, while every officer and man in the Grand Fleet was with the intrepid attackers in spirit and envied them their opportunity.

This gallant feat of arms came at a time of deepest anxiety when our armies were yielding one position after another.

On May 1st Wemyss left for a meeting of the Supreme War Council at Abbeville to give his views on the naval situation and impress upon the Council the disastrous results which the uncovering of the Channel Ports was likely to have, views entirely endorsed by Admiral de Bon. It was his first meeting with General Foch, with whom he was later on to be so intimately connected. To Wemyss' question, "What were the steps to take if the Germans broke through," his only answer was "*Ils ne passeront pas*" ("They will not pass"): a reiteration of the same query only evoking the same answer, Wemyss abstained from further questioning. Later on, during their many conversations at Compiègne while the Armistice negotiations were going on, he took occasion to ask the Marshal why he had been so sure of the Germans not breaking through; the latter then confessed that, far from this being the case, he had simply not dared contemplate such a possibility.

It was at this War Council that the unity of command

under General Foch was decided; on leaving Abbeville, Wemyss went to lunch with Sir Douglas Haig at Montreuil. He thought him

very dignified and behaving very well, as it was impossible he should like Foch over him.

Although refusing to look upon the position on the Western Front as either lost or irretrievable, he took steps to be prepared for every eventuality. He had stoutly opposed the policy of evacuating the Channel Ports, but as far back as the end of March he had already been conferring with General Wilson as to their demolition should the Army be driven back upon the Western Ports. He was also taking measures for the evacuation of the whole Army if necessary, which happily proved not to be the case.

While the German Armies were continuing their triumphant offensive the intensive anti-submarine campaign which Wemyss had inaugurated was beginning to bear fruit. In March, for the first time since the commencement of unrestricted submarine warfare, our shipping replacements had exceeded our shipping losses; for the first time too, in May, more enemy submarines had been sunk than could possibly be built in a month. Over a million of American troops had been safely brought over; the Convoy system was working well. The Convoy Section at the Admiralty had for the last year been presided over by Paymaster Manisty, who as Wemyss' Secretary during the Channel Patrol had been instrumental in drawing up the first Convoy plan. Though up to the last we were still fighting the enemy submarines, it was evident by the beginning of summer that the U-boat campaign which constituted the German naval offensive and our greatest menace was practically defeated. On the King's birthday (June 3rd) Wemyss received the G.C.B. in acknowledgment of his services.

He was very tired—War Councils, Inter-Allied Naval

Councils, War Cabinets, Board Meetings added to the routine of the Admiralty were proving a strain, even on his robust constitution and ever-alert brain. Having made all arrangements for any and every contingency, including the evacuation of the Army, he left for Wemyss at the beginning of July. It was his first opportunity for a few restful days—visiting his old friends the cottagers, the neighbours. His wife and little girl were with him; surrounded by his family, for a short period the cares of office were forgotten. The Grand Fleet was at Rosyth; the Firth of Forth in consequence presented a scene of the utmost animation. From the windows of the Castle he could see battle-cruisers manœuvring and every kind of naval activity. At Methil, the port built by his ancestor Earl David, the Scandinavian Convoys were assembling. A trip to Inverness to visit the British and American depôts, inspections on the East Coast of Scotland, and he was back at the Admiralty on July 23rd much refreshed.

When still at Wemyss on July 16th news had reached him of the renewed German offensive. Foch's successful counter-offensive on July 18th was to mark the turn of the tide; from henceforth the Allied Armies were to pursue their triumphant march to final victory.

In June the First Lord had gone to Russia, to Murmansk, where the state of affairs was far from satisfactory. The Allies had hailed the Russian Revolution with enthusiasm, but the results had so far proved disastrous, while their consequent policy of opportunism, at times fighting with Bolsheviks, at others fighting against them, had been neither dignified nor successful. In July, to general consternation, rumours of the Emperor's assassination began to circulate. Bolshevik money and Bolshevik propaganda were said to be the cause of the London police strike; at the beginning of September the murder of Captain Cromie, the British Naval Attaché, by the Bolsheviks, while defending the Embassy, filled the Admiralty with horror; his body, stripped and exposed at the Embassy

window to the jeers of the Petrograd populace, was only rescued and accorded decent burial under a neutral flag owing to the efforts of the Danish Minister, Scavenius.

That such an insult to the Navy or indeed the Nation could possibly remain unavenged or even apparently unresented roused all Wemyss' ire against the politicians, who seemed so incapable of upholding their country's honour. Their whole attitude indeed was to him a constant subject of wonder and amazement; only a short time before there had been "a curious outburst" on the part of one of the Ministers,

* who made the suggestion that the mining should be carried out by the Americans. I demurred to this, and said that I should prefer to do it ourselves as then I should know it was carried out properly. X. then said that he thought it was dreadful that the British Navy took upon themselves all responsible and difficult jobs. I replied that of course we did if we wanted it properly done, as, with the exception, perhaps, of the Germans, we were the only Navy on whose efficiency we could rely. He then turned round to me and said, "It's that damned efficiency of yours that makes us so hated by other people!"

What a curious state of mind for a Cabinet Minister! ! !

Their want of knowledge—but above all their desire *not* to know—was what always surprised him. On his return from Egypt, at one of the Cabinet meetings Lord Curzon in his most unctuous manner had said to him: "I understand, Admiral, you have formed certain opinions." "Yes, and damned strong ones too," was the unexpected rejoinder. Curzon hastily turned away and never asked again. Strong opinions or independent opinions were the last thing they wanted, for they lived in a world of their own, far removed from reality.

The revolutionary tendencies which owing to Lloyd George and Clemenceau were beginning to dominate Allied

Councils now sought to include the destruction of the Hapsburg monarchy amongst the Allies' ever-varying war aims. This question happened to be one Wemyss was well acquainted with. He had studied it in the papers of his father-in-law, Sir Robert Morier, one of the greatest authorities on German and Austrian politics, and had no doubt but that the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy must necessarily entail two results: the creation of Mittel Europa, for so long the Allies' bugbear and the addition sooner or later of the German-speaking provinces of the Austrian Empire to Germany, thus giving the latter that hegemony which to prevent so much blood and treasure had for over four years been lavishly poured out.

He embodied these ideas in a memo. that began by stating:

It is a well-known fact that before Sadowa in 1866, Bismarck offered Austria the alliance and friendship of Prussia, on condition that she would withdraw from Germany and remove her capital from Vienna to Pesth. That this idea, i.e. a greater German Empire comprising all German lands, German Austria, Baltic Provinces, etc., allied to a great Balkan Power of which Hungary would be the head, the Magyars being very favourable to Germany, has not ceased to haunt the minds of many German statesmen, is indubitable.

The disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would automatically lead to this result. Germany would acquire the hereditary Hapsburg lands (Erbländer) and the Tyrol, which comprise the best fighting population. Hungary would probably become the predominant partner of a Balkan federation. . . .

And ended with:

The great lesson of this war has been the strength of homogeneity. The greater the homogeneous block, the more powerful will be its attraction, politically and economically, upon the weaker States by which it is surrounded. The acquisition of the German-Russian (Baltic) Provinces obliged Finland to enter into the German sphere of influence. The

acquisition of the Austro-German Provinces would force Poland, probably Switzerland and even perhaps Italy, to do the same.

This memo. he tried to circulate amongst the Ministers, but with no success, Lord Milner being the only one who took the trouble to read it. He was later on to hear that it was Mr. A. Balfour and the Foreign Office who were particularly insistent on the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. He began to be appalled at the thought of what a peace founded on such lack of wisdom was likely to bring forth—fears shared by others; for not long afterwards the Danish Minister, M. de Castenskyold, a great friend and frequent visitor at the Mall House, came raging to tell of an offer made by A. Balfour and the F.O. to Denmark of the Kiel Canal—an offer energetically refused, Holstein being ultra-German and Kiel rabidly so; he could not expatiate enough on such folly.

The end was beginning to be in sight.

On September 26th, Bulgaria, totally collapsed, asked for an Armistice, and events henceforth began to develop rapidly. From every side the news was good; Paschendael Ridge had been taken, Cambrai said to be on the point of falling. On September 28th the First Lord had departed on a Mission to the U.S., so that it was again on Wemyss that all the responsibility devolved. On October 1st he went down to spend the night with the Prime Minister, where he met Sir H. Wilson, Lord French, and others to discuss the Bulgarian situation; the talk was more military than naval, but he was struck with how little they seemed to know about Germany's political system.

The great problem now was, Would Turkey follow in Bulgaria's footsteps, and if so, what would be the naval situation? So as to keep in touch with the rapidly evolving state of affairs Wemyss sent Admiral Hope to Paris on October 4th.

On that same day the appointment of Prince Max of Baden as German Chancellor was announced. Old Princess Wittgenstein, whose intimate friend he had been, had often spoken to him of the latter's humanity, his high-mindedness, his liberal sentiments; since then he had learnt of his refusal to burn Belgian villages, his care for the prisoners. He therefore augured that acceptance of the Chancellorship could only mean a cessation of hostilities in the near future and was not surprised when on the following day he heard of his peace offer to the U.S. On the day after (October 6th) a telephone from Admiral Hope at 3 a.m., asking for the naval terms of Armistice, proved that matters were moving towards a climax.

The terms themselves presented no difficulty. He had long ago made up his mind as to what they ought to be; the problem was how to get them accepted. On the one hand he realized what a blow to Admiral Beatty and the Grand Fleet still clinging to the hopes of a Trafalgar such an end of hostilities would be, on the other hand he was well aware of how ardently the Government desired peace. Indeed, a fifth winter of war was a prospect none could view with equanimity—neither the Generals in the field, nor the authorities at home. The frequent strikes during the late summer and early autumn had been an alarming symptom. Mr. George Barnes, one of the few Ministers with whom Wemyss saw eye to eye, considered the labour situation as bad, while Wemyss himself was uneasy at the reports which reached him of discontent amongst the bluejackets, for he knew how badly paid they were and how justified most of their grievances. He had often thought how far better it would be if some of the preposterous sums squandered on war propaganda—another name for bribing the Press—and secret intelligence, uncertain information from questionable people, were employed in ameliorating the lot of those fighting for the country.

The month of October was one of hard work and great anxiety.

At the end of September a mysterious disease, afterwards called Spanish 'flu, had broken out in Portsmouth barracks claiming many victims; spreading with alarming rapidity all over the country, it had ravaged the Grand Fleet and by October reached London. People dropped down with it in the street; deaths were so numerous that there were neither enough doctors nor undertakers. It was an added terror for the already despondent population.

During all this time War Cabinets and Board Meetings followed each other in rapid succession, where peace terms were being discussed and drawn up. Wemyss spent much time and energy in trying to placate Admiral Beatty on one side, the Prime Minister on the other.

Feeling was running high at the moment between Allied and Associated Powers; the Versailles Inter-allied Council had only heard of President Wilson's reply to Germany through the columns of *The Times* and were proportionately irate. When it was published in London vast crowds gathered in the streets, while newspaper boys called out the news till 1 a.m. The atmosphere was one of tense expectancy.

On October 16th Wemyss with the Board of Admiralty drew up the naval terms of Armistice, endeavouring, as he said, "to moderate the zeal of violent Sea Lords." Both Admiral Beatty and General Haig were now being called into council; when the latter asked Wemyss for a destroyer to take him back to France, he replied if he could he would put the Grand Fleet at his disposal—he had great admiration for Haig's quiet courage, his dignity, and the abnegation with which he was always ready to sacrifice his own interests to those of the country.

At this crucial moment one of the greatest difficulties confronting the Cabinet was their absolute ignorance of German conditions—what was happening in the front lines

was generally no secret, but the internal situation of the enemy countries was as a rule completely unknown, for which Wemyss considered the Intelligence Departments no little to blame.

There were still to be many meetings, one on the 21st, when the Cabinet sat from 11.15 a.m. till 6.30 p.m., before the terms were finally drafted and Wemyss was able to write (October 26th):

* It has been most difficult to get any satisfactory conclusion out of the War Cabinet. They are always inclined not to come to any strong decisions and leave matters in a nebulous state; however, under the circumstances we are as favourably placed as we can be. The whole Board are unanimous on our pressing the business. I have had many says at the War Cabinet, and they are really very impressed with the fact that so far as the Naval terms are concerned it is impossible not to embody terms of peace.

I am going off to Paris to-morrow. We have an Allied Naval Council on Monday, the results of which I have not the slightest doubt of, and feel perfectly certain that I can carry them all with me, and I therefore look forward to a unanimous resolution to put before the Supreme War Council at Versailles on Tuesday. The crux will, of course, come there, but the Board of Admiralty have very satisfactorily strengthened my position. The First Lord accompanies me, and he will be at Versailles and will back me up at the final business.

Sir E. Geddes had returned a few days previously, on October 22nd, from the U.S.

It was the good fortune of both England and France that at this critical juncture the latter should have possessed in M. Georges Leygues not only their most eminent Minister of Marine of recent times, but also a convinced and fervent upholder of the English Alliance, for in conjunction with Admiral de Bon it enabled the Naval Staffs of both countries to work together in closest collaboration all through the Armistice and Peace negotiations.

* To Admiral Beatty.

On October 27th Wemyss left with the First Lord for Paris.

* *Monday 28. Paris.* In the morning an informal meeting of Allied Naval Council—de Bon very much of our way of thinking.

More conferences in the afternoon. Questions are difficult. From our point of view Naval terms of Armistice must include those of peace. The Americans were tiresome—sententious—and the Italians grasping.

Tuesday 29. I interviewed Americans, whom I found easier than I expected. I got them to agree to our terms. Went out to Versailles with First Lord and drove back with him and Prime Minister, the latter very firm about "Freedom of the Seas," but inclined to think Naval terms too hard. This is dangerous—I could agree *if* terms of Armistice could be different to terms of peace, but this is not so. In the afternoon a formal Allied Naval Council, which was tiresome because America kept putting up alterations which were nothing at all. Eventually we got a unanimous decision.

Wednesday morning, Oct. 30. Reading *re* "Freedom of the Seas." The truth is that we have allowed ourselves to be manœuvred into a difficult position. We do not mean to accept "Freedom of the Seas," and yet we have never protested or said so. Now of course we cannot enter into Armistice without saying so, or giving the enemy the chance of saying that we are breaking faith and got them to accept terms of Armistice under false pretences. . . .

Saw Prime Minister at Ministère de la Guerre. He wants me to stay here, as Naval questions may crop up at any moment. I *ought* to return to London—situation in North Sea not too clear. Lunched with Mme de . . . She thinks abdication of Emperor would be a disaster. Tells me Germans afraid of Bolshevism. I think the fear of Bolshevism is a greater disease than Bolshevism itself. It is not likely to take the same form in Germany, France or England as in Russia. Of course socialism has had a great shove forward. . . . Saw P.M. again and after interview returned to hotel to make out a full justification for our terms of Armistice. Did so with First Lord and made, I think, a good case. Took it to Embassy in the evening—arranged to go to

Versailles in the morning. Summary of ideas. Naval terms are stiff—but not more than we deserve and are good for Europe. Military terms are also stiff so that the politicians want a softening somewhere. I really don't think that we can afford to ease down. Haig agrees and thinks *Military* terms should be softened. The French and Foch of course would like Naval terms eased, but the cases are not analogous, and I am right.

In consequence of to-morrow's conferences I cannot go back to-night, but hope to-morrow. This is made easier by hearing that the submarines have all been called in. North Sea should be clear. Does this portend new planned offensive or an abandonment of naval warfare? I am inclined to think the latter.

Briand was at the Embassy. Though he talked cleverly enough I did not catch any great wisdom from his lips. His utterances were quite banal. The ignorance of French on the part of Englishmen is very deplorable; P.M. frankly ignorant—every word has to be interpreted for him—Bonar Law speaking with a broad Glasgow accent—Reading, translating word by word and nobody *really* understanding. Rather terrible. . . .

Thursday, Oct. 31. Telegram to say that Armistice with Turkey has been signed—hostilities cease at noon to-day—Calthorpe has done well. Allied Naval Council in afternoon. Supreme War Council want Austrian terms lightened. Made slight modification in terms. Supreme War Council 2 p.m. Naval terms agreed to. . . .

Friday, Nov. 1. Talk to P.M. on subject of Naval terms—not satisfactory. The manner in which these negotiations are carried on beggars description. No method—few decisions—few agreements. P.M. very adroit at getting away from discussions when he finds them inconvenient. An Allied Naval Council at Versailles at which . . . was stupid and certainly obstinate . . .; however, a unanimous decision that we cannot recommend a modified draft as the three P.M.s desire! First Lord is very clear and very sound. . . . Went with him after dinner to get a letter from Arthur Balfour upholding our views and pointing out to P.M. the difficulties he might be incurring if he paid no attention to Allied Naval Council's views. So far, so good. They are to

decide to-morrow, which will be another tiresome day. I *must* get back to-morrow. . . . Turkish terms excellent and Calthorpe has done very well. To-day we hear of Revolution in Vienna in the morning and of the Yugo-Slavs proclaiming independence in the afternoon. They, as their first act, cry to President Wilson for assistance and call themselves our Allies! Italians naturally don't like this and in the meantime they appear to have sunk one of their battleships! Things happen so rapidly that it is really difficult to keep pace with it all. As de Bon remarked to-day, "There is a fear of our brains being left behind."

On November 2nd Wemyss returned to London, after so many difficulties and discussions that he was led to wish that it were "as easy to compete with our friends as it was with our foes."

The Supreme War Council considered that the Naval plus the Military terms were too stiff; the Naval Allied Council reiterated them. The matter was again postponed until a reply had been received from Austria—in the meantime Austria had ceased to exist! What was happening in the High Sea Fleet was not very clear—it seemed certain that the crews of some of the ships or of the shore establishments had mutinied. The Supreme War Council then decided that the terms of Armistice should be the surrender of 160 submarines and the internment of a certain number of ships.

A flag of truce was expected within the next few days. Marshal Foch, representing the Allied Armies, and Wemyss, representing the Allied Navies, were to meet the German delegates. After a final interview with the Prime Minister, he, in consequence, left London on the evening of November 6th.

* *Thursday, Nov. 7, 1918.* Arrived in Paris 7 a.m. and was met at station by Brig.-General Grant of General Du Cane's Staff. He is to accompany me to French G.H.Q. when the time arrives—probably to-day. A meeting with Admiral de Bon and Admiral Benson at Ministry of Marine. . . . I saw Townshend at luncheon, who was inclined to be talkative.

* Memoirs, and notes on preliminary negotiations.

In the afternoon we motored out to Senlis with Grant and called on Marshal Foch and then tea with Du Cane and I joined the Marshal's train at 5 p.m., Hope, Marriott and Bagot accompany me. We immediately steamed away and the train was taken into a siding in the Forest of Compiègne. The train containing the German delegates is expected during the night and will stand in a siding close to ours.

The Frenchmen are all naturally very elated but dignified and calm, the Marshal quiet and confident. He told me he proposed to do as little talking as possible, to let the Germans do it all and then hand them the terms of Armistice. If they accept the principles he may discuss details.

Friday, Nov. 8. The train containing the Germans arrived at 7 a.m. I saw the Marshal early and found him rather nervous but dignified. A message was sent over to them to say that we would receive them at 9 a.m. The plenipotentiaries are Erzberger, Count von Oberndorff, General von Winterfeld and Captain Vanselow. The Mission walked over at 9 a.m. and were shown into the saloon by General Weygand. The Marshal and I were next door and came in when they were all present. Erzberger presented his people and the Marshal ours. The Marshal then formally asked them what they had come for and had they their credentials. These they handed to the Marshal and he and I left the saloon to examine them. They were quite in order, were signed by Prince Max of Baden but gave no power to sign any Armistice.

On our return to the saloon we all sat down, each Mission on one side of the table facing each other, and General Weygand read out the terms of the Armistice and they were translated by interpreters—British and French.

General Winterfeld, reading from a scrap of paper, then asked on behalf of the German High Command that hostilities might cease immediately. He said that such an action might save many lives. Foch replied that cessation of hostilities would only take place after the Armistice had been signed. Germans then formally asked for a copy of the terms, which were given them, and a short discussion took place as to the manner of transmitting them to Berlin. They have come without cyphers. The meeting then was closed and the answer has to be given by 11 a.m. on Monday.

All the Germans are very much distressed—naturally so. Erzberger showing most nervousness—but Winterfeld and Vanselow looked the most distressed. The General in his little speech asking for cessation of hostilities used the word "*déroute*" in connection with the German Armies. The naval and military terms did not seem to affect them so much as the civil and financial ones. My impression is that they must and will sign. Bourbon-Busset,* who was in charge of them, said he thought they were all very down.

An extra 24 hours was asked for, but this was refused. The time has been calculated and is sufficient.

Erzberger is a common looking man, a typical German bourgeois.

The train is very comfortable. I have quite a good cabin, the size of two wagon-lits thrown into one. We have a whole wagon to ourselves. There is an office for the Staff, a dining-room and the Marshal's own bedroom and sitting-room. Baths are apparently not thought of!

It is a curious scene in the middle of the forest—raining and leaves falling, and yet there is nothing sad—at any rate for us. The two trains 200 yards off each other. Stray sentries in blue-grey can be seen amongst the trees. Nothing else in sight. We are in telephonic communication with Paris and the world.

Apparently the German Army is getting demoralized. Meanwhile papers have arrived and the whole story of the Naval mutiny is out. How will it affect the Naval terms? It will be difficult for them to comply.

The Marshal told me, were the Armistice not to be signed, he would have the capitulation of the whole lot in three weeks. He also said that yesterday a whole regiment of Boches had laid down their arms and came in crying that now there was peace. Bourbon-Busset told me that the Germans were throwing away their arms and to-day a telegram came to say that they are actually leaving their field-kitchens behind. The Mission said nothing about Bolshevism.

No further regular meeting.

Hope saw Vanselow, who merely asked questions relative to the terms. He is afraid of the blockade and seems actually

* Colonel Comte de Bourbon-Busset, a friend of Wemyss.

to think that we shall keep it up for the purpose of starving their country during the Armistice! Such is their mentality, so I suppose that is what they would have done had the cases been reversed. Vanselow also asked if we should sink any submarines during the Armistice! Really it is unbelievable. He said that Bolshevism had appeared in their Army during the months of April and May. The fact is that that was the time of their enormous losses and to speak of the decline of morale as Bolshevism is ridiculous. I am told that all day Friday the state of the delegates was deplorable but that they bucked up a little during dinner.

Friday evening I had a long conversation with Foch. In reply to my questions he told me that the hardest term in the Armistice was the time that the 9th Army had to retire. If carried out, it meant that they must leave everything behind. He is determined that the German Army shall be thoroughly beaten. Foch is very ignorant about all matters Naval. I gave him certain information which interested him, and tried to explain to him what the Navy was doing and had done. I think he began to grasp the subject a little. He explained to me the difficulties the enemy would encounter in withdrawing from Belgium, from which I began to understand why Vanselow had spoken about using German ships in Antwerp for evacuating their troops. Foch won't have this at any price. Also we must have all the German ships in the pool for re-victualling all countries.

Sunday, Nov. 10. Yesterday morning we motored to Soissons. Truly a dreadful sight—not one single house is habitable. The Cathedral is literally torn in two. Going through the streets gave one the impression of visiting Pompeii. We were shown some of the outlying houses which with great ingenuity and without any change in their external appearance had been made into regular fortresses. The news which reached us during Saturday was tremendous and varied. The abdication of the Emperor—at first it was thought that Max of Baden remained as Chancellor. Then a manifesto to the German people and world, saying that a Socialist Democratic Government had been formed and that the functions of Chancellor had been taken over by Ebert. In the meantime a republic seems to have been proclaimed in Bavaria. All seems to be confusion. It would appear that

the plenipotentiaries have no longer any powers and one would think that Erzberger at any rate has no longer any standing.

Last night I telegraphed to the Prime Minister telling him that the Mission feared that the continuance of the blockade would mean the starving of the country and that I proposed to tell them that we should consider the revictualling of the country.

Von Oberndorff yesterday saw Weygand and pointed out certain clauses which they think should be altered.

On the Sunday afternoon I took a long walk with G. Hope—there was nothing doing. A German courier had left at noon on Friday; in spite of all preparations being made, it was found he could not get through the lines because of the German fire—the first intimation that the German fire discipline was getting bad. The courier was finally despatched by aeroplane.

On Sunday evening I had been talking to the Marshal for a long time after dinner and was just going to bed when an A.D.C. came and told me with the Marshal's compliments that he thought that the German Envoys had received instructions and would probably want to see us to-night and would I therefore be ready. Consequently I did not go to bed but lay down until midnight, when I was told that the Envoys had asked to be received immediately. They came into the train and we resumed our seats as we did on Friday morning. There was but slight inclination on the part of any of the Germans to any protest. In one or two small matters, such as number of locomotives or aeroplanes to be delivered, they assured us that it was impossible to accede to the demands since we had over-estimated their strength and the Marshal showed reasonableness and to all intents and purposes the Military terms of the Armistice were signed. In the case of the German forces in East Africa the word capitulated which appeared in the original text of the Armistice was allowed to be altered.

When it came to discussing the Naval terms, Vanselow showed a captiousness which was tiresome and quite unavailing. He made the remark, was it admissible that their fleet should be interned seeing that they had not been beaten?—the reply to this was obvious and it gave me a

certain amount of pleasure to observe that they only had to come out!

On discussing the submarine situation, he told me, somewhat to my surprise, that there were not nearly a hundred and sixty to be had—this gave me the chance of getting what I had always wanted, viz. *all* the submarines. I may say here that the question of the Naval terms of Armistice had caused a good deal of discussion. I had originally asked for the “surrender” of eleven battleships, six battle-cruisers, eight light cruisers, fifty destroyers and all the submarines. The politicians, however, were frightened and considered these terms as too heavy and desired to make them lighter, because they feared that there was a point beyond which the Germans would not go and they (very rightly) considered, so far as Great Britain was concerned, the present was the best psychological moment for obtaining a peace. I had many arguments with the Prime Minister on the subject and was quite aware that the French for the same reason wanted the general terms eased, and that this should be done at the expense of the British Navy rather than at the expense of the French Army. During some of the discussions on this subject Foch had said: “Do you expect my men to go on fighting for the sake of ships that do not come out?” thereby displaying his entire ignorance of the general situation and of the part which the Navy had played in the war. Lloyd George had endeavoured to whittle down these terms and had suggested every sort and kind of compromise—a reduction of the ships to be delivered, etc., and had eventually agreed to the internment of the surface vessels as a compromise. This I had accepted as the best to be got, and with an undertaking from him that these ships should never be returned to Germany but surrendered at the peace. It was the same with the question of the submarines; Lloyd George had objected to the word “*all*.” By fixing a number which I felt sure would give us what they had got I had hoped to achieve my end—which I did. It was therefore a pleasure and a satisfaction to me to get the opportunity of inserting the word *all* in the terms.

The Armistice was eventually signed at 5.10 a.m. and it was decided that the time should be taken as 5 a.m. and that hostilities should cease at 11 a.m. The Germans then



Left to right: ADMIRAL HOPE, GENERAL WEYGAND,
ADMIRAL SIR R. WEMYSS, MARSHAL FOCH, AFTER
THE SIGNING OF ARMISTICE, NOVEMBER 11TH 1918

went back to their train and we dispersed. Having to start for Paris at 7.30 a.m., I felt it was too late to go to bed, and so Hope and I went for a walk in the forest, and it was a queer feeling that I had that the war was at last over and that bloodshed would cease at 11 o'clock.

I drove back to Paris with the Marshal and went straight with him to the Ministry of War—where we were received by Clemenceau, whose joy and satisfaction he made no attempt to conceal, and taking my right hand in his left and the Marshal's left hand in his right, Foch and I joining hands equally, we all warmly congratulated one another. I went to the Embassy and sent a detailed telegram to the Government. On leaving the Embassy the news was beginning to get about and the streets were already full of people making merry. In the afternoon the crowds in the Place de la Concorde were enormous. I left Paris in the evening and arrived at Folkestone at 9.30 next morning.

His wife had come to meet him; together they motored up to London, and for the first and last time in his life he completely broke down: strain, emotion, joy, pride. He had taken over the Navy in its darkest moment, when defeat seemed imminent; he had guided it to this its triumphal hour.

On their way up they saw in the papers that there was a Thanksgiving Service, and driving straight to St. Paul's arrived in time to join in the Nation's thanksgiving for deliverance "from battle, murder, and from sudden death."

CHAPTER XIII

ADMIRALTY AND THE PEACE CONFERENCE

WHEN the Armistice which entered into force in the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month had been signed at 5.10 a.m., Wemyss had telephoned the tidings to the King and the Prime Minister.

On his return next day he was immediately sent for by the King, to whom he rendered an account of his mission, while on leaving Buckingham Palace an enthusiastic reception awaited him from the assembled crowd.

For days previously the approaches of the Palace, the Mall, Trafalgar Square had been thronged by expectant multitudes; when the news of the Armistice spread like wild fire on the morning of the 11th they all, men, women, children with one accord, and amidst scenes of frantic joy and indescribable enthusiasm, streamed towards Buckingham Palace to acclaim the King and the Royal Family, ovations repeated during all that day and night and many subsequent ones. Never had the British nation testified so unmistakably, so ardently their devotion and loyalty to the Crown.

When announcing his arrival to Buckingham Palace, Wemyss had done the same to the Prime Minister and spent all that afternoon and evening awaiting a summons, but—much to his astonishment—in vain. He deemed it beyond the bounds of reason that the Prime Minister should not desire to know what had passed on so momentous an occasion, and his astonishment turned into amazement when the following day, on attending the War Cabinet, instead of the congratulations he expected, he met with black looks and an icy reception.

It was only on leaving the Cabinet that he was to discover the key to this enigma.

The Prime Minister had apparently planned a spectacular

announcement of the Armistice which he hoped to make at the Guildhall Banquet on November 9th; balked of this by the Armistice not yet being signed, he projected doing so in the House of Commons on the afternoon of the 11th—the news being meanwhile kept secret. This proved impossible after Wemyss' telephone to the King, who had announced the happy tidings to his entourage; the Armistice was accordingly made public at 11 a.m.; popular enthusiasm concentrated at Buckingham Palace—while his official statement in the House of Commons fell flat; hence his almost unconcealed fury.

Wemyss shrugged his shoulders; the whole matter appeared to him so incredibly petty; indeed, he could hardly have believed it, had it not been vouched for by two unimpeachable authorities.

What disturbed him far more at the time was the dissatisfaction which he knew was being felt by the Grand Fleet, and more especially Admiral Beatty, for he well entered into their feelings. The Grand Fleet had been the idol, the pride of the nation. To belong to it the ambition of every naval officer, not to do so almost a slur. True to Nelsonian traditions it seemed to them a sheer impossibility that the war should be brought to a successful conclusion without that great and glorious victory for which they had, amid the gales and fogs of the North Sea, been waiting over four years, only to realize that the war had been fought and won.

During all these months his collaboration with Admiral Beatty had been close and friendly, and it was his sincere wish it should continue so to the end.

He strove by every means to disarm his susceptibilities. Admiral Beatty having demanded that the return of Heligoland should be included in the Armistice terms, he wrote to him from Compiègne Forest on November 10th, the eve of the signature, saying:

I received your letter late last night and read it with great

regret. You are surely under a misapprehension as to the general state of affairs, and certainly so as to my not taking you into my confidence. It is true that events have occurred so rapidly that it has been impossible for me to talk to you, and letters and telegrams are, I am quite aware, very inadequate under such conditions as are now obtaining. I had hoped, however, that Fuller's* visit to you would have eased that difficulty. As regards Heligoland, I was quite aware of your views. Unfortunately the Prime Minister in spite of his original dictum that terms of Armistice should approach as nearly as possible the terms of peace was, as you know, anxious to cut down the Naval terms. We had a great fight about the number of ships and differences between internment and surrender, but, as you know, he gave me an assurance that none of the ships would go back to Germany. Heligoland he objected to very much, and I was obliged to tell him when he asked me that I considered that as terms of Armistice *if* we got those ships, the holding of Heligoland was not of such vital importance *now*, though that eventually the enemy would have to give it up. And this is to be a matter for the Peace Conference. You write as though I were satisfied with the terms of Armistice. Naturally I would have liked all you and we asked for, but under the political and other circumstances this was impossible.

Three days later, returned to London, he again wrote to him in the most affectionate terms:

Nov. 14. My dear David,—Since seeing Brock† and writing to you I have had a little time to think about matters, and think that it's worth while writing and giving you an idea of the general atmosphere as it appears to me. There can be no naval officer who does not see the end of this war without a feeling of incompleteness, and that that incompleteness does not arise from any sense of failure. We feel it strongly at the Admiralty and realize how much more it must be the case with you and the Grand Fleet. The Navy has won a victory greater than Trafalgar, though less spectacular, and because of this lack of display it feels that the unthinking do not perhaps realize what the nation—indeed the whole world—owes the British Navy. The studied way

* Captain Fuller, Director of Plans, Chief of Staff to Admiral Beatty. † Admiral Brock.

in which the Navy is being ignored—in which Foch and his part are being exalted at its expense, both by the English Press and the politicians—I feel and resent as greatly as do you and the whole British Navy.

It is impossible for me to protest. You and I are in the same boat and any action on our part would only be attributed to personal advertisement. For the last month I have been fighting the battle of the Navy against the politician—not against Geddes, who has always been on our side—and a hard struggle it has been. The politicians wanted to cut down the terms of Armistice a great deal more than they did, and it was with the utmost reluctance and in fear and trembling that they eventually consented to what had been decided. Lloyd George helped originally to make matters difficult by saying the terms of Armistice should contain as nearly as possible the terms of peace, and then hedging and in fact being as shiftily as is the nature of politicians in general. As for consulting you—well, I seem to have lived the last few days in motor-cars and trains and much of my business was actually carried out in a car between Versailles and Paris. Conditions were perpetually changing and it was physically impossible to keep you more *au courant* than I did. I know that you are feeling you were originally short-circuited, but I think that I explained all this to you on Oct. 21, and again to Brock to-day, and believe that you will readily understand that nothing was further from my thoughts than ignoring the C.-in-C. Grand Fleet. I think I may claim that my attitude ever since I have been First Sea Lord will bear this out. I have been having a hard and difficult time of late and am quite as irritated as you are against all those who call themselves our masters. As an example I will only mention that I have not seen the Prime Minister since my return. One would have thought that simple curiosity would have led him to enquire as to what happened at Compiègne! Whatever happens, do not ever let the shadow of a misunderstanding come between you and me. We both of us have the interests of the Nation and the Service at heart and have worked with too great a loyalty together for the last ten months to let anything come between us, and moreover my friendship for you is too great and too sincere to allow of anything of the sort!

While he added, in a postscript:
A smiling face does not always cover a light heart.

The Supreme War Council had originally decreed that the German capital ships, cruisers, and destroyers should be interned in neutral harbours; the neutral Governments, however, evinced but little desire to undertake the custody, and Wemyss therefore recommended their being interned in Scapa Flow until disposed of by the Peace Conference, while he proposed that Admiral Beatty should enforce the execution of the clauses in the Armistice which related to their surrender and internment; some time before he had written to him:

Should there be any question of surrender . . . we hope that such will happen on the quarter-deck of the *Queen Elizabeth*.

The German Squadron under Admiral Reuter sailed on the 20th; to the last Wemyss doubted their doing so, convinced they would rather scuttle their ships than surrender them; their arrival on the 21st was therefore a surprise and a relief.

There were those who pressed him to go and witness the surrender, all the more as it was to take place almost within sight of his old home; but he refused—he scrupulously avoided impinging in any way on Admiral Beatty's authority or importance; moreover, though this he did not confess to, to witness the humiliation of a fellow-officer, even an enemy one, would have been extremely painful to him.

He had plenty to keep him at the Admiralty; hostilities had ceased, but the work was ever increasing and the cry went up: Give us back the peaceful days of war!

*Peace, terms of peace, terms of armistice, demobilization, the question of officers and men, and various appointments, are perpetually cropping up, and, in fact, nothing can be settled until we know how matters are going to turn out between ourselves and our friends and allies!

* To Admiral Calthorpe.

London was full of animation. The northern route from Russia, the only one available, brought a constant stream of refugees and others; amongst whom Wemyss and his wife found many friends. General Romei, head of the Italian Military Mission to Russia, passing through from Petrograd, related to them how he had seen the body of the ill-fated Cromie hanging out of a window till taken away by Scavenius, the Danish Minister, in his motor; he described the outbreak of the revolution, the weakness of the Emperor, the cowardly way he had been abandoned by all, the reign of terror, the daily executions.

Another friend passing through at this time was General Mannerheim, the Regent of Finland, one of the few outstanding personalities the war had brought forth. At the head of a force originally numbering only 1,200 peasants, he had defeated 70,000 Bolsheviks and delivered his country from a red revolution characterized by peculiar atrocity. His popularity extended to Sweden, which equally on the brink of Bolshevism had been saved by Finland's triumph. Twice on the point of seizing Petrograd and thus saving Russia, he had been prevented on one occasion by the Finnish Senate, under German pressure, on the other by the Allies.

On December 1st, Marshal Foch and Clemenceau's visit to London evoked great enthusiasm. Ever since the days spent together awaiting the Armistice, Wemyss had conceived a very real affection for the former.

The old Marshal is a dear he had written enthusiastically to his wife from Compiègne Forest on November 9th, simple, straight—a big man—inasmuch as he knows what he wants and means to get it, while, when he dined with them on this occasion, he completely won the heart of Lady Wemyss not only by his charming smile, which when he talked lit up his whole face, but by the way he spoke of her husband: “*Quel soutien dans*

un pareil moment d'avoir à côté de soi un homme aussi loyal, aussi sûr" (What support in such moments to have by one's side so loyal and trustworthy a man).

They were to meet again shortly when the Armistice had to be renewed, this time at Treves.

**Dec. 12. Treves.* Joined the train at Senlis at 5 p.m., Wednesday Dec. 11. Same party as last time on the French side—only Marriott with me. We arrived at Treves at 9 a.m. on 12th. The country we passed through seemed quite deserted—no cattle in the fields, and no people in the villages.

The German delegates came at 10 a.m. Exactly the same party, though no less than forty people came from Berlin to Spa. We had refused to meet anyone else.

The delegates were quieter and calmer than last time, and although they were not so down, they seemed more humble—all the little occasional signs of arrogance that were visible a month ago are now missing.

The meeting was quite formal. The Marshal said that we had met to renew the Armistice. There were one or two terms that had not been faithfully carried out, and there were one or two cases of brutality which had come to his notice. He didn't wish to be hard, but said he reserved to himself the right of occupying other bridgeheads if there were any more difficulties.

I said that since *Mackensen* was not in a state to tow over, they must send us the *Baden* in lieu. It is a curious fact that the two things in my original proposed terms of Armistice that the Prime Minister would not listen to on any account, viz. "all" submarines and internment of *Baden* will have come off. They asked about the fishing. I replied that Admiral Browning would consider that when the mine-sweeping was reported satisfactory. They also tried to argue about the ships condemned in German Prize Courts, but I told them we had no faith in their courts—they had broken all international law and that I refused to discuss the question. The meeting lasted about an hour when they returned to their hotel to communicate with Berlin.

During the day Weygand had conversations with

Winterfeld and Oberndorff and Marriott with Vanselow, and from those the following facts were gleaned.

There exists a "Council of Six," Ebert, Haase, etc., but they have no mandate and no legal power. The bureaucracy still exists and is functioning under the orders of the "Council of Six." Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils exist, but more as a sop to the people than anything else. They have no real power and do nothing. Vanselow told Marriott that he was the only Naval officer who could do anything, that the others seemed to have collapsed. If the Soldiers' Councils try to interfere with him or with Erzberger they simply go away and are begged to return by the Councils, who find themselves quite powerless to do anything. Erzberger during the sitting said that they were demobilizing the Army, but the true state of affairs seems to be that the soldiers are demobilizing themselves and returning to their homes. The officers seem to have no authority left.

Oberndorff and Erzberger say that the elections will take place on February 28th and that they hope the present state of affairs may continue till then, but they feel that anything may happen at any moment.

The people are tired of the war and are ill and have no resistance left, and the sooner they get more food the sooner will there be a Government and the smaller the chance of revolution.

Hindenburg and Lüdendorff are still at their work and much respected.

They have been asking, "When will the Peace Conference begin?" and cannot understand why they have never been answered. *I* know the reason. We are awaiting the arrival of President Wilson.

This afternoon I visited the Cathedral, in which I was disappointed, and walked about the town. The place was very quiet, but the general demeanour of the inhabitants did not appear anything but normal. I was with Marriott and two French officers and our appearance did not seem to give rise to any curiosity. Occasionally, but very occasionally, the people looked round at us. They did not look actually underfed, though they had not that rather bucolic and well-fed appearance that one generally connects with Germans. The shops appeared quite normal and full of

wares, except provision shops, whose windows were certainly but sparsely furnished. Many private houses seemed empty, but it was a beastly wet day and difficult perhaps for that reason to form a very correct general impression.

American troops are in occupation, and one hears rather weird stories of their doings. The German delegates on their arrival were taken to their hotel and locked into their rooms! One of them went to bed ill and asked for a doctor. He arrived and was promptly locked in too! This is apparently the Yankees' way of carrying out their orders that these gentlemen were not to have any communication with the inhabitants! Probably badly worded orders and fear of doing wrong through ignorance. The station master accompanied Erzberger to the hotel and was also locked in and not allowed out. He asked that he might communicate with his wife with a view to getting some linen for the night. The note was sent to G.H.Q. for permission to deliver it. Nothing has since been heard of the note—nor presumably of the night-shirt!!

On the other hand, I hear the American soldiers are extremely kind to the children, giving them chocolates, etc. I must confess it gave me no pleasure to walk about amongst these people. I believe them all to be tarred with the same brush of brutality and I don't like "doing the conqueror." I hear on all sides that in the occupied towns there is no hatred or ill-feeling shown to the troops—only a general attitude of indifference.

It was not only the Germans who were asking when the Peace Conference would begin. The question was being put on every side and tension was rising.

The world was gradually drifting to ruin, while President Wilson was leisurely proceeding to cross the ocean to add yet more confusion to allied Councils, and British politicians were busy electioneering to the cries of "Hang the Kaiser" and "Make the Germans pay."

The whole question of "war-guilt," the proposition to try the Emperor William, the Crown Prince, the so-called "war criminals" Wemyss considered preposterous, looking upon

it as one of the election cries, the stock in trade of the professional politician, but when on travelling back one day from Paris with an eminent lawyer, the latter upheld the guilt of the Kaiser, the justice of bringing him to trial, he remained aghast; that an educated man, a distinguished lawyer to boot, could hold such views, appeared to him well-nigh inconceivable.

To their credit be it said, the French reluctantly and only at the earnest request of the British Government associated themselves with so grotesque a proposal condemned by every reasonable and thinking person alike.

It was in a far different quarter that Wemyss believed the principal authors of the war were to be found.

For years before its outbreak he had watched the baleful activities of the armament trusts; the manner they had, heavily subsidizing the Press, influenced public opinion in every country, stirring up strife and creating an atmosphere of hostility, ill-will and suspicion between nations.

He had realized all the danger brought about by international armament rings who, playing into one another's hands, had a direct interest in the inflation of navy and army estimates and in war scares; for the more armaments were increased abroad the more, obviously, had they to be increased at home.

To put an end to the era of destructive wars and help on the cause of disarmament would, he felt, be only possible by eliminating the element of private gain from the manufacture of armaments and thus make the waging of war no longer a source of private benefit.

He had been much struck by an article by Mr. W. Harbutt Dawson which seemed exactly to express his own views on the subject and had asked him to come and talk the matter over and draw up a memorandum embodying the ideas which they shared.

THE PRODUCTION OF ARMAMENTS

Consideration from the Standpoint of Public Policy

1. The assumption by the State of responsibility for the production of armaments may be claimed to be the first presupposition of any effective measures for the systematic limitation of armaments.

2. Apart from the moral objections to the present system, which makes warfare a direct occasion of private gain, the system is attended by the inevitable consequence that the multiplication of armaments is stimulated artificially. Every firm engaged in the production of armaments and munitions of any kind naturally wants the largest possible output. Not only therefore has it a direct interest in the inflation of the Navy and Army Estimates and in war scares, but it is equally to its interest to push its foreign business. For the more armaments are increased abroad, the *more they must* be increased at home. This interrelation between foreign and home trade in armaments is one of the most subtle and dangerous features of the present system of private production. The evil is intensified by the existence of international armament rings, the members of which notoriously play into each others' hands. So long as this subterranean conspiracy against peace is allowed to continue the possibility of any serious concerted reduction of armaments will be remote.

3. Merely to accept measures for the regulation of production (cf. Lord Grey's recent proposals that Governments should take steps to acquaint themselves with the shipbuilding done in private yards and its destination and compare notes on the subject) would be at best an instructive exercise in statistics; it would not contribute to practical peace endeavours.

4. The nationalization of armament production, if it is to be a real aid to the maintenance of future peace, implies international action. It is suggested, therefore, that one of the articles of the Treaty (or Treaties) of Peace to be concluded with the enemy countries—and in any case with

Germany and Austria-Hungary—should require these countries to accept the principle that the production of armaments should be a State Monopoly and should undertake to give effect to such measures for the application of this principle as the Powers represented at the Peace Conference should *reciprocally adopt at a later date*.

5. Short of prohibiting the production of armaments of special kinds by private firms altogether, measures would be necessary in order to check production for foreign countries. An international agreement, were it possible, would be the most effective safeguard. For example, if the future expenditure on ship construction were fixed by international agreement, the disadvantage of private firms building for foreign countries—if still allowed—would be reduced to a minimum. If, alternatively, the tonnage of war-vessels that might be built in each country were laid down by agreement it would follow that only so much tonnage as could not be built in a Government yard for national purposes could be built by private yards.

6. The successful carrying out of any international arrangements of this kind would presuppose the fullest confidence and exchange of information between the Treaty Powers. Not only would the future naval and military attachés have more important duties to perform than hitherto, but a standing International Intelligence Board, composed of experts, delegates of the various Governments, might be found indispensable.

7. The proposal would find public opinion sympathetic to a degree which has never existed before. To so moral a measure opposition on principle would be impossible. The opposition would endeavour to justify itself by practical and technical objections and these it would be necessary to anticipate and guard against.

Considerations from the Technical Standpoint

8. If the question is brought forward by the Admiralty, it should be in the form of a thoroughly practical scheme, watertight throughout, every contingency anticipated as far as is humanly possible, with demonstration that it is not

merely expedient, which only a small minority of people will doubt, but is workable.

9. The importance of joint action by the Admiralty and the War Office. To clear away the conservatism of the latter might require the use of much argumentative dynamite.

10. No time more favourable than the present for a radical change of system is conceivable. For private shipbuilding yards, plate rolling works, marine engineering works, and the like will long have as much as they can do in rehabilitating the mercantile marine.

11. The importance of the State keeping hold of the new warship-building yards and suitable munition works, and refraining for the present from any precipitate action as to their disposal.

12. The desirability of easing the transition to private firms as far as may be legitimate, with a view to weakening the argument of "vested interests."

13. One of the first objections will be that a nationalized system of armament production might not enable the country to meet a sudden emergency. The best answer to that contention is that if the Peace Conference meets the world's expectations the arrangements which it will devise (e.g. effective measures for international conciliation and arbitration, the regulation of armaments, the reduction of standing armies, etc.) should make impossible any such sudden emergency as occurred in August 1914. Nevertheless Government works might be equipped for an output far in excess of the normal and be made capable of meeting with ease and expedition largely increased demands. Power might also be taken to commandeer at any time private works or their staffs.

14. The parliamentary economists will inevitably raise the question of extra cost (they may be bores, but they have a following and must be humoured). They will ask: Can the State produce as well and as cheaply as private undertakers? It may be worth while to work out a comparative estimate, treating the Government works as commercial undertakings, capitalizing them on a reasonable basis, allowing for all administrative expenses, etc., with a view to showing that from the merely material standpoint the nation would receive value for its money.

This he placed before the Admiralty, where it met with whole-hearted dissent; he was swamped with technical difficulties, confronted with objections which he felt unable to overcome; he therefore dropped the subject. He always regretted it. He was convinced that if ever disarmament were to become a reality, this would be the only means of insuring it and the Peace Conference the psychological moment for doing so.

But even had he been capable of influencing the Admiralty, it would probably have been impossible to persuade the Cabinet, where Sir Basil Zaharoff, Chief Munitioneer and leading personality in the armament world, had many firm and powerful friends; even the G.C.B. had been bestowed upon him, much to Wemyss' disgust, for he considered the bulging pockets of these gentry ought to be their sufficient reward.

Armament firms were all-pervading; even in the Admiralty of late years the regrettable practice had grown up of ex-officers and officials of the Admiralty entering into their employment.

This, however, was the result, the inevitable result, of the scandalous way the Navy, officers and men alike, were underpaid. Amongst the many reforms instituted of late years, advance of pay had never figured; from time to time certain concessions had been made, small increases for various branches, but nothing like their due.

Whilst hostilities were in progress they all had with splendid loyalty, without thought or murmur, given their whole-hearted efforts to winning the war, but this accomplished, they had time to think about their own private concerns and discontent loomed large.

They had been serving by the side of highly paid Colonial and U.S. ratings, which had brought home to them the fact, that British officers and men were paid considerably under their market value; when they returned on leave and realized

how the price of living had gone up, the high wages paid in munition and other factories, the huge salaries obtained by the business men brought in by the Government, bitterness grew and the feeling in the Fleet became bad indeed.

Wemyss' whole sympathies were with his shipmates and their grievances; he knew how well-grounded these were; he had purposed laying them before the Government as soon as the Armistice was signed. But the politicians were away, electioneering; all important decisions had to be held up and the matter put off till after the elections.

December 26th was marked by the arrival of President Wilson; hailed by vast crowds as a Messiah, but considered singularly inopportune by overworked officials whose first Christmas holidays since the war were thus cut short. Wemyss was amongst those who had to hurry up from the country, and from the first conceived a strong dislike to him; he instinctively mistrusted his sincerity, and when asked his impression, said he reminded him of Carker in "Dombey & Son."

A series of festivities had been arranged in the President's honour: a State Banquet at Buckingham Palace; a luncheon at the Guildhall on December 28th, the day the result of the elections became known. Wemyss, in close proximity to Asquith, heard him loudly proclaim that he, at all events, could eat his luncheon in all quietude of mind, assured of the result; before the end of the meal news reached him that he was out!

The elections were amazing; Lloyd George and his party had literally swept the country.

A visitor far more welcome to Wemyss than President Wilson at this time was Emir Feisal, son of King Hussein of the Hedjaz; a stately and picturesque figure in his flowing Arab robes and Hedjaz head-dress, he came to 'lunch at the Mall House with Colonel Lawrence. Sir Henry and Lady McMahon had been asked to meet him, and for a few short

hours Wemyss felt transported back to the happy days in Egypt, which he often dwelt upon with keen regret. He was beginning to be desperately tired of his present life, the endless toil, the ceaseless hustle, the drab passages and rooms of the Admiralty, the hated office work.

He loved weaving plans, and his brain was already busy with future projects. His war experiences in the Mediterranean had taught him the transcendent importance of Malta from a naval point of view, its total unimportance from a military one, for difficulties of transport alone would always prevent troops being collected there; yet the Governorship was a military one. To replace the General by an Admiral; to merge the C.-in-C. and Governor into a Naval High Commissioner for the Mediterranean, thus ensuring that unity of command and policy which would have proved so valuable during the late operations, was Wemyss' scheme, and the post to be created one he coveted and which he conceived the services he had rendered entitled him to.

Meanwhile his task lay nearer at hand. Sir Eric Geddes, who had been asked to undertake the demobilization, was leaving the Admiralty, much to Wemyss' regret, for he had greatly appreciated his loyal support, the whole-hearted way he had always backed him up. His place had been taken temporarily by Lord Lytton; Wemyss hoped it might be permanently so.

Cabinet-making was in full swing. Wemyss marvelled at a political system which had succeeded in so completely divesting authority of all responsibility.

A commanding officer who lost or hazarded his ship was tried by court martial and liable to be dismissed from the Service.

A handful of politicians devoid alike of knowledge and experience, seated round a table in Downing Street and carried away by the eloquent persuasiveness of one of their

number, could with impunity send 120,000 men to their doom without ever being called to account, while not one of them but was to hold high office again.

Wemyss had declared to Sir Eric Geddes that under no possible circumstances would he serve with Mr. Winston Churchill.

It was eventually Mr. Walter Long who was appointed First Lord. In their first interview he made a favourable impression on Wemyss, all the more as he seemed keen to second his efforts for raising the pay. Before his advent Wemyss had already written most urgently to the Prime Minister impressing upon him that prompt action was called for; while the Admiralty had issued an order to the Fleet informing officers and men that the question was under consideration, and on January 6th appointed a Committee under Admiral Jerram to deal with the matter.

The old year had ebbed out amid trouble and turmoil; the longed-for cessation of hostilities had not brought peace. Poles were marching on Berlin, Bolsheviks on Riga; our Squadron was bombarding Lettish barracks; in Portugal the President had been assassinated. The war, too long protracted, had sapped the foundations on which our social edifice had hitherto rested; stability was gone.

The second month of Armistice was drawing to its close and so far peace negotiations had not even begun. While everything thus hung in suspense, public dissatisfaction grew intense, manifesting itself in the case of the soldiers by demonstrations soon degenerating into riots and even mutinies.

Rumours began to spread that men on leave returning to France had mutinied at Folkestone; lorry loads of soldiers drove up and down Whitehall demonstrating against the War Office. Russian friends lately escaped from the revolution anxiously inquired whether the Mall House had a back exit, solicitous for the safety of its inmates. Sir H. Wilson made no secret to Wemyss that he considered the state of the

Army most disquieting; the men were absolutely resolved to be demobilized and the Army at the front discontented and determined to come home, which he held was the result of Lloyd George's electioneering speeches.

In the Navy too there was trouble and even mutiny, and for the same reason; everywhere the Armistice had raised hopes, so far unfulfilled, an anxious time where Wemyss' knowledge of the personnel, the reliance he could place on the officers, was to stand him in good stead, as well as his personal popularity, which extended beyond the Navy.

During the height of the disturbances, motoring in the outskirts of London, he had met a body of mutinous troops marching on Whitehall; a senior officer in uniform in a large Rolls Royce might well, in those times, have excited hostile demonstrations. Far from it! When the mutineers recognized him they cheered him to the echo.

Wemyss had not returned to Treves for the second renewal of the Armistice, which he sincerely hoped might be the last; his place had been taken by Admiral Sir M. Browning.

After various delays he started for the Peace Conference on January 24th, accompanied by his wife and Captain Fuller. At Folkestone the C.O., Admiral Yelverton, gave a dramatic account of the recent mutiny, how the soldiers had held the pier, picketed the boats, and not allowed any soldier, except colonial, to embark. Eight generals with white kid gloves had come down from London to harangue the mutineers without the least effect; a battalion sent for from Canterbury was disarmed and their ammunition thrown into the sea. In view of these scandalous scenes Admiral Yelverton had stopped the sailings until order was restored. A few days later (January 27th) an even worse mutiny was to break out at Calais amongst the English troops.

These events strengthened Wemyss' conviction that drastic steps ought to be taken to hasten peace negotiations.

The feeling in Paris since the Armistice had changed as

much as in London; the long delay had turned enthusiasm into disillusion, hope into pessimism; everybody and everything in connection with the Conference, already nicknamed the "Grand Guignol" by the Paris populace, was bitterly criticized and the victory of the Allies likened to that of Samothrace, i.e. without a head. Wherever they went and in whatever class of society, they heard the same story: fury at the slowness of the Conference, danger of revolution, want of faith in the negotiators.

Wemyss took counsel with Admiral de Bon and Admiral Benson; they decided to try and induce the Conference, instead of again renewing the Armistice in February, to open preliminaries for a military and naval peace, which would enable fleets and armies to be demobilized and the blockade to be raised; lamentable tales of the sufferings of the German population were coming from the occupied regions, where our soldiers were sharing their rations with the women and children. They resolved to ask Marshal Foch to join in this step, which he heartily agreed to. On January 27th he had invested Wemyss with the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, bestowed upon him for his services in connection with the Armistice, a simple and touching ceremony which took place at the Invalides in presence of his wife, General Weygand, and several other generals, where the Marshal in a charming allocution praised Wemyss' *loyauté and énergie*.

The whole universe seemed congregated in Paris, where they were continually coming across not only their numerous French friends, but those from every part of the world, many of them in the most unexpected capacities or on the strangest missions. General Botha, with whom they had travelled from London, was being sent to Poland, to his own intense astonishment as he spoke nothing but Dutch and English! whither Sir Esmé Howard, Wemyss' old schoolfellow, was equally bound. Aubrey Herbert figured as an Albanian delegate.

Colonel Lawrence was with Emir Feisal, about whom he related the following delightful anecdote: When the Emir was asked by the Supreme War Council to what Power Arabia desired her Mandate to be given, he replied that the Arab Empire was a great Power when France was a German province, England practically unknown, and America as yet undiscovered; the interpreter with ready tact translating this into: the Emir says Arabia was a great Empire when the Allied and Associated Powers had not yet the importance which they at present possess!

The Prinkipo proposal, that of negotiating with the Bolsheviks, received by the latter with scorn and contempt, was said to have emanated from President Wilson and caused bitter resentment, adding to the discredit which already enveloped the Conference; on every side, from allied officers, from Poles, from Russian refugees appalling accounts of the atrocities the Bolsheviks were committing, atrocities so monstrous that Western imaginations shrank from them, came pouring in.

The execution of the Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovitch, Nicholas and George Michaelovitch, Dimitri Constantino-vitch in the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, by order of a sadist Jewess, the Petrograd Commissar, under revolting circumstances (the Grand Duke Nicholas Michaelovitch, too weak and ill to stand, had been shot in a wheelbarrow) aroused general horror, all the more as both the Grand Dukes Paul and Nicholas, the latter an eminent historian and Member of the French Academy, were well known in Paris. It was said that the invitation to Prinkipo had been their death-warrant, for after that the Bolsheviks conceived themselves emboldened to anything.

During all this time Wemyss had been successfully pursuing his negotiations; Admiral de Bon was very eager, Admiral Benson less easy to deal with. It was finally settled that the naval and military chiefs should each write to their

respective Prime Ministers pointing out the urgent necessity of beginning peace preliminaries. Wemyss in consequence wrote a strongly worded letter to Lloyd George, drawing attention to the dangers of delay; Marshal Foch did the same to Clemenceau, while Admiral Benson, not without difficulty, was induced to write to President Wilson.

By January 31st Wemyss felt he had scored a triumph; his views had been accepted. On Clemenceau's invitation he was to call a meeting to arrange about terms as soon as he returned from London, for where he was leaving next day; the Admiralty was clamouring for him and much work had accumulated during his absence.

In England he found everything in utter confusion: strikes everywhere—in the tubes, the undergrounds, 'buses. Riots at Glasgow, at Belfast, where the troops had been called out and there had been killed and wounded.

On February 6th he was back in Paris for the sitting of the Peace Conference when the naval and military chiefs, Marshal Foch and Wemyss, the two signatories of the Armistice, acting as spokesmen, were to expound their views. They accordingly assembled at the Quai d'Orsay at 3 p.m., where they were kept waiting outside till 5.30 p.m., when it was announced the sitting was over! Their indignation can better be imagined than described. Wemyss first told Lloyd George and then Clemenceau what he thought. He heard the latter say to Foch, "Vous êtes Maréchal de France, vous vous connaissez en affaires militaires, mais les questions économiques ne vous regardent pas" (You are Marshal of France, you understand military matters—but economic questions are no concern of yours).

The wisdom and knowledge of those whom it *did* concern may, however, best be gauged by the fact that a committee of experts, which included the Governor of the Bank of England, had certified Germany's capacity to pay at 24,000 million pounds!!

Tempers were growing heated, and it was not surprising that on the following afternoon at the Quai d'Orsay, when renewed efforts were being made to put off the sitting, Marshal Foch indignantly left the room, followed by General Weygand, saying they could not stand it any longer. The Supreme War Council hoped the incident was closed, but Wemyss now rose up and insisted on being heard.

Warning the Supreme War Council of the intolerable situation created by the prolonged delay, of the dangers incurred thereby, he stressed the necessity of opening preliminaries for a naval and military peace. "Peace," President Wilson was heard to exclaim in a shocked voice. "Does the Admiral speak of peace?" "Yes, Mr. President," was the quick retort. "I always understood that was what we were here for!"

As Wemyss used afterwards to relate, the word "Peace" produced the same effect on the august assembly as a shot into a covey of partridges: they all rose and fluttered away. In vain did he buttonhole the Ministers, explain his point of view; they all agreed but . . .

It was only a few years later, on the publication of Mr. Lansing's "Peace Negotiations," that he realized that President Wilson's opposition arose from his determination no peace should be drafted which did not include the Covenant of the League of Nations. He then wrote to Mr. Lansing, who replied that he well remembered the meeting of the Supreme War Council on February 8th 1919, when Wemyss had advanced his plan for a preliminary peace and when Mr. Wilson and Mr. Balfour had been the principal objectors, the reason for which Wemyss now doubtless understood. Nothing could be settled before the Covenant was reported and adopted. "That is the rock," so he wrote, "on which every practical suggestion for an immediate peace was wrecked. The world has had to pay the penalty for having such bad pilots that the Conference could not hold a safe course."

Deploring "the veritable nightmare in international affairs of the last two years"—the result of what he termed the "disaster of Paris"—he could not but think "that much might have been spared if the Paris Conference had acted wisely and justly instead of being guided by impractical theories based on an over-developed idealism."

Wemyss never pinned the slightest faith on the League of Nations, so aptly defined as the nineteenth century's idea of what the twentieth century *ought* to be. Idealist though he was, his idealism was rooted in realism, and his robust common sense told him that, devoid of force and incapable therefore of upholding its decisions, the League must necessarily sink into a mere debating society more likely to breed wars than to prevent them.

Wemyss and his wife, who had awaited him in Paris, now returned home. At Folkestone they learned fresh military disturbances had taken place in London; when they arrived at Victoria Station it was militarily occupied. The strikes had been very bad, but were supposed to have ended.

He had left Paris in the hope his views had prevailed. A few days later (February 13th) he received a telegram to say all his terms had been accepted by the Peace Conference and his proposals agreed upon.

I am perfectly delighted (he wrote to Admiral Hope) at the turn affairs have taken and do take a certain credit to myself for having stirred the mud up! . . . I cannot understand Wilson's attitude. You say that he never seems to have grasped the idea, whereas I put it straight to them at the Supreme War Council. However, that does not matter so long as we can get our way.

Congratulations on what he had achieved reached him from many sides.

Il faudra élever un monument à votre mari (a friend, much in touch with political circles, wrote to Lady Wemyss, March 1st). Cet admirable homme a fait plus pour la paix

que tout le reste de l'univers. C'est absolument grace à lui que l'en donne le coup de collier actuel. Comme il disait vrai, en parlant du danger que ce lambinage allait faire surgir! A peine avait il fait connaître son point de vue, que Clemenceau attrapait sa balle. Malheureusement la Conférence ne peut plus retrouver le temps perdu.

The satisfaction he derived from this success compensated in some slight measure the innumerable difficulties and vexations besetting him on every side.

Shortly before his departure for the Peace Conference, the Admiralty had been startled one morning by a quasi-official announcement in *The Times* of his resignation and the immediate appointment of Admiral Beatty in his stead, coupled with a most venomous article about Naval pay. An authoritative denial was immediately issued to the Press, while Wemyss asked the editor of *The Times* to come and see him:

I asked him why it was that *The Times* had made such a statement so authoritatively when there was no foundation for it. He replied that he never would have allowed it to be published had he not had it on the highest authority. He naturally declined to give me the source of his information, but so astounded was he to hear that I had not resigned, that I could have no illusions as to his statement.

It was evident even to the most unsuspecting mind that some plot was afoot. Suspicion fastened on various people, amongst others the Prime Minister, but in an interview Wemyss had with the latter shortly afterwards he disclaimed all participation in the intrigue, which he admitted having been aware of, and hoped Wemyss would continue to occupy his present position.

He had never contemplated with equanimity the prospect of remaining on at the Admiralty after the war was over. He realized that the mentality required for post-war problems was a very different one to that required for war, and as he had become thoroughly attuned to the latter, made up his

mind that he must at the psychological moment leave. But what was the psychological moment? Personal desire pointed to the Armistice—and yet duty bade him, with all the threads of the many and complex negotiations in his hands, to remain till the terms of peace were carried out.

Matters were complicated.

Ever since I had been First Sea Lord I had suffered considerable inconvenience and difficulty from the power which had gradually accrued to the C.-in-C. Grand Fleet in the matter of appointments—not only of Admirals and Captains—but even of officers of lower rank. My predecessor had very naturally and very rightly always consulted him on such matters; but the habit had so grown that the C.-in-C. had almost got into the way of looking upon such appointments as being his prerogative and had more than once almost tried to use his veto. This had put me into difficulties more than once, because I had rightly or wrongly—rightly I think—made up my mind that if ever he should have to put to sea for a general engagement, he should do so with a mind perfectly at rest, with no lingering doubts as to the fitness of the personnel whom he had to lead, if it were in my power to bring this about. . . .

But now that the fighting was over I told the First Lord that I thought it most necessary that the Admiralty should immediately resume its authority and prerogative, which it had gone perilously near to handing over altogether, and that no better way could be found than by filling up the first Admiral appointment without consulting the C.-in-C.

The First Lord concurred and accepted my advice, but I am unaware whether he agreed with it whole-heartedly or not.

Unfortunately an incident occurred which emphasized the Admiralty view and needlessly aggravated the C.-in-C.'s soreness.

On my advice Sir R. Keyes had been nominated to the command of the Battle Cruiser Squadron, and it was arranged that the Naval Secretary should inform the C.-in-C. of this forthcoming appointment, instead of, as had grown up to be the practice, asking him if he concurred in it.

Unfortunately the news reached Sir D. Beatty unofficially before he received the Naval Secretary's letter and he chose to regard this as a slight upon himself.

In vain did Wemyss try to persuade him that this was not the case. Writing to him on February 28th, he said:

There is of course the question of appointments. On this I have got opinions, and do feel that it is a question for the Admiralty rather than for the C.-in-C. It is a principle on which I am sorry that we differ; but there is no reason, as far as I can see, why because we differ on a principle that the difference should take a personal turn. . . .

We are too old and firm friends to quarrel about anything, much less a comparatively minor question, and I am certain you are as determined as I am that the Service shall not suffer as it must do if the C.-in-C. Grand Fleet and First Sea Lord are known to be at loggerheads. Won't you come and see me and let us talk things over? I don't believe that you wish to embarrass yourself when you come here. Anyhow, let us talk it over.

I suppose it is more than could be humanly expected that two men, placed as you and I are, should see actually eye to eye on every subject that may possibly arise, but that does not seem to be a reason for any personal feeling to be brought into the matter, and so far as I am concerned, let me assure you there is none.

But Admiral Beatty proved irreconcilable.

However, other and more important issues now occupied Wemyss' attention.

He had returned to Paris on February 18th with high hopes as to the progress of the peace negotiations, all the more as President Wilson, his most pronounced opponent, had departed to the U.S.; but in Mr. Balfour he was to find an equally determined adversary.

He is too old (he wrote of the latter); a subtle brain but not one of the description wanted here, where quick decisions and action are required.

Clemenceau, who had always supported his views, was

laid low by the bullet of an assassin. Wemyss returned to London not a little disheartened.

A further visit to Paris a fortnight later was not more successful; day after day, morning and afternoon, Admirals and Generals met to discuss and draw up naval and military terms—only to find them impeded.

Three meetings to-day (he wrote on March 3rd), two to-morrow, one on Thursday. As things are run by this Conference I suppose one can't say that they are going badly, but oh! the lack of initiative, the seeming determination of the Council of Ten *not* to come to any conclusion—it is heart-breaking. They seem to have the happy faculty of creating Bogies out of air, and once these Bogies are in existence they are so proud of their creation that it is difficult to persuade them they are nothing but gas-balloons.

So skilful and competent a negotiator had he shown himself on these occasions that, when shortly after difficulties arose over the provisioning of Germany and the disposal of German ships and negotiations with German delegates broken off at Spa were to be resumed at Brussels, the Prime Minister insisted it should be he and not Marshal Foch who was to meet them.

It was therefore at the head of an imposing Mission comprising amongst others Mr. Hoover, afterwards President of the U.S., and Prof. Keynes, the well-known economist, that he set forth on March 13th. He had carefully thought out his procedure. He, and he alone, was to be spokesman—the meeting then to be adjourned, while he adroitly let the Germans know through an intermediary how far we were prepared to go. The result was most satisfactory—there was no hitch of any kind, all the demands were acceded to, while the Americans, who, accustomed to a spate of oratory, had been inclined to grumble, were the ones most delighted.

Brussels was still very disorganized, and the King told him they had nearly 800,000 unemployed. He visited galleries,

admired the pictures; even the years of war had not blunted his artistic sense nor his love of the beautiful.

He was warmly congratulated on his success by Lloyd George and Colonel House on his return to Paris, where matters had again come to a standstill; now that President Wilson had returned from the U.S. dilatory tactics were again to the fore.

While thus toiling for his country's good, a violent Press campaign was being launched against him in England; an agitation to put Admiral Beatty in his place. Wemyss had a perfect horror of advertisement, or even of seeing his name in print; in fact, he hardly knew a journalist by sight. Though second to none in his admiration for Admiral Beatty and the Grand Fleet, he was yet well aware, as he wrote to the First Lord (March 10th), that it was not "they who had brought the war to a successful conclusion" and that "they had had little or nothing to do with the anti-submarine warfare."

All these perturbations left him calm and unconcerned if somewhat contemptuous.

But it was a sad disappointment to learn from the First Lord that his long-cherished scheme of the Mediterranean High Commissionership had been rejected, the reason put forward being the desire to retain his services at the Admiralty—the real one, the opposition of Winston Churchill, who wished to keep the governorship of Malta in the hands of the War Office.

Wemyss regretted this deeply; so did the Maltese population, by whom he was beloved. Sir G. Strickland was later on to tell him that when the decision was known at Malta the populace rose in the streets to the cry of: "We don't want a soldier; we want Sir Rosslyn Wemyss."

On March 27th more appeals from Paris, telephone messages from the Prime Minister, obliged him again to hurry over. President Wilson, the apostle of Peace, had thrown off

the mask and come out for a big Navy! Whether on his own initiative or induced thereto by Mr. Daniels, the American Naval Secretary just come over, none knew. Wemyss was not surprised; he had always suspected him of being insincere and had long known him to be very anti-British. He hoped our delegates would not give in, but uphold our Naval Supremacy. Lloyd George so far seemed firm, and declared that if the U.S. built a big Navy, we must outbuild them. It was, however, not the Prime Minister but Mr. Balfour whom he mistrusted, aware how much he was under American influence. The meeting was adjourned, but when he returned the week after he found the deadlock continued. So hedged round by mystery were the Council of Four that nobody exactly knew what was going on. It was said that the Conference was on the point of breaking down. What would happen then? Nothing happened—nothing ever did happen.

How weary he was of the useless journeys, of the Hôtel Majestic with its crowd of jazzing F.O. clerks and typists, of the vain efforts and futile discussions, the humanitarian clap-trap, the high motives invoked, the low practices pursued, the planlessness of the whole proceedings! The French had at the outset (November 29th) proposed a scheme for co-ordinating the work of the Conference, but this had been brushed aside by Messrs. Wilson and Lloyd George, who preferred their informal conversations. The result had been four months wasted in unprofitable dissertations.

And there was so much to be done.

News of the Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary under Bela Kuhn had just reached London; it afterwards transpired that the Conference had long been warned by reports and telegrams of this eventuality without taking the slightest heed.

The revolutionary welter devastating Russia had greatly increased since the Armistice, one of whose conditions had

prescribed the evacuation of Southern Russia by the Germans. Their arrival there in 1918 had spelt salvation to the wretched population, harassed, murdered, and tortured by the Bolsheviks, for Germans are a disciplined race. When they had entered Riga, it was said that mutinous Russian troops had brought their officers bound to them, hoping to be rewarded. The Germans released the officers, giving them the choice of returning to Russia or being made prisoners of war, and then proceeded to shoot every tenth man of the whole division. Their methods in the South were no less energetic and expeditious. Law and order were promptly restored and a Government established under Hetman Skoropadski—a happy choice. In the Crimea, where the Dowager Empress and those of the Imperial Family who had survived the massacres as well as many members of the aristocracy had taken refuge, they arrived in the very nick of time, for twenty-four hours later the Bolsheviks, as one of them confessed, were planning “a massacre of St. Bartholomew like in the French Revolution.”

When the Germans left after the Armistice all had been peaceful and quiet, but was not long to remain so; the French troops who replaced them were undisciplined; the French General, advised to put himself into communication with the Hetman, refused to do so; members of his Staff were said to favour the Bolsheviks; soon the country was overrun by Red troops—Odessa and later on Sebastopol evacuated.

The King had long desired that the Dowager Empress should leave the Crimea; already in November Admiral Calthorpe had sent up officers to arrange for her departure, but firm in the belief that the Czar was still alive she had refused to move. Now the situation was such that there was no time to be lost. Wemyss therefore made all arrangements for the evacuation, sending H.M.S. *Marlborough* for the Empress and other ships for the many refugees along the coast,

amongst whom were many of his friends. It was the very last moment; a little longer and they would all have perished.

He had had to do this entirely on his own initiative and responsibility and without referring to the Cabinet, for had he done so he greatly suspected he would have met with a refusal. Now many lives had been saved, while those of the refugees who came to England were full of praise and gratitude for the many kindnesses received from both officers and men.

The fall of Odessa—that of Sebastopol, both so well known from the Crimean War, was to have a tremendous repercussion all over the East, and added to the vacillating attitude adopted by the Conference towards the Bolsheviks, did much to lower the Allies' prestige. There were many who were convinced that the unrest and riots in Egypt at that time were amongst the more immediate consequences.

The position was grave; it was to become graver still when news arrived from the Black Sea that the French Fleet had mutinied.

This bombshell burst upon the Admiralty at Eastertide, creating consternation. Wemyss immediately ordered the Fleet up to Sebastopol. Though foreseeing he might be called upon to sink the mutinous French men-of-war—what an epilogue to the Alliance!—he never wavered. Fortunately a Greek destroyer on the spot when the mutineers hoisted the red flag opened fire, and finally, with the help of the crews who had remained loyal, put an end to the revolt.

This lamentable occurrence, which was to cause no little embitterment between the French and English Fleets, was, however, open to explanation. Our officers returning from the Black Sea had described Bolshevism as "catching as measles." The Admiralty had in consequence by constant changes of ships and crews taken great care to prevent contamination, whilst the French, whose crews had often been on board for years, war-weary, undisciplined, allowed to

fraternize with the population on shore and thus open to every kind of propaganda, fell easy victims.

The removal of just grievances, due regard for the well-being and contentment of the men appeared to Wemyss the only method of counteracting revolutionary tendencies—a method he never ceased to practise.

One of his greatest preoccupations had long been the question of naval pay. By the end of April, after months of strenuous labour, the Jerram Committee had produced a scheme of pay for officers and men on an ample and generous scale, though by no means more than their deserts. The Board had approved—the Cabinet hesitated. Wemyss was determined, come what might, the Navy should not be baulked of what he considered had long been overdue. Patient and loyal as the Fleet had been, submission had its limits. There were rumours of a plot to stir up mutiny on Sunday May 11th—six months after the Armistice—the soldiers to down arms. Wemyss had no intention that the sailors driven to exasperation should join them.

A meeting called to settle the question was held on Tuesday May 6th at the House of Commons and proved unsatisfactory, the opposition of the Prime Minister, that of Mr. Bonar Law, appearing irreducible. On Tuesday evening Wemyss addressed the following note to the First Lord:

From reports made to me I feel assured that, should any postponement after to-morrow (Wednesday) of an announcement that the Government has accepted the pay and pensions recommendations of the Jerram Committee be made, there will be serious trouble in the Fleet. Under these circumstances I feel it my duty to say that I do not feel myself responsible for the conduct of them and that it would be my duty to ask the Prime Minister to relieve me of my responsibilities.

There ensued two days of extreme agitation. Mr. Long, heartened by Wemyss' example, resolved to follow it.

Together they were to lay their decision before the War Cabinet on Friday morning.

As his wife watched him go down the steps of the Mall House with his resignation in his pocket, she wondered whether he would return as First Sea Lord.

She rather hoped not.

CHAPTER XIV

ADMIRALTY AND RESIGNATION

VAIN thought! The Cabinet capitulated all along the line. Wemyss rejoiced to think that at least one of the tasks he had at heart to achieve had been accomplished.

On May 7th the peace terms had been delivered to the Germans at Versailles.

*After months of delay the Conference—confronted by mutiny, revolution, civil war—had terminated in hot haste the work begun at leisure; lightning speed now took the place of dilatoriness, hasty improvisations that of lengthy discussions. The fourteen points were virtually discarded; annexations turned into mandates—indemnities into reparations, while every principle up to now invoked was jettisoned. The heroism of armies and navies had been in vain, and served only to “give one half of the world just cause to rise up against the other half.”

When the peace terms were published they met with a storm of reprobation, calculated as they seemed to be to rouse the maximum of resentment with the minimum of security.

The Allies had stood before two alternatives—a negotiated peace, i.e. a preliminary naval and military peace, followed by economical, financial, and political negotiations with enemy delegates, the procedure up to now usually followed—or an imposed peace which involved the maintenance of fleets and armies on a war footing. In the true Anglo-Saxon spirit of compromise—and Anglo-Saxon influence greatly dominated the Conference—they chose a middle course: an imposed peace but without the fleets and armies which alone could have guaranteed it.

It was some time since Wemyss had returned to Paris; his principal work, the drawing up of the naval peace terms, had long been finished, and Admiral Hope, our naval repre-

* Dr. Dillon, “Peace Conference.”

sentative at the Conference had his full confidence. The allocation of the surrendered or to be surrendered German ships was causing no little fluster among inter-Allied Admirals. Wemyss' solution of the difficulty would have been to tow the ships into mid-ocean and sink them, a spectacular sacrifice on the altar of peace; but this idea had met with no success—as little as had his desire to see all submarines destroyed. But he was quite content to let them settle it amongst themselves. His friend, Admiral de Bon, was leaving the Ministry of Marine to take up an active command—he envied him.

The Press campaign against him had never ceased and was being waged with increased virulence. At first these attacks had bewildered, amazed him; he had believed himself to have some claim on the gratitude of his countrymen; he had not realized that to succeed there where others have failed is often in itself a crime.

Unable in his position to defend himself, he called upon the First Lord to do so, but Mr. Walter Long, an amiable old gentleman, was first and foremost a politician ever with his ear to the ground to discover the trend of public opinion; he had no intention of compromising himself with what might after all turn out to be the unpopular side. Wemyss soon had to make up his mind he had only himself to count on. Taking advantage therefore of the Academy Banquet he delivered a carefully prepared speech, in which he referred to those bent on stirring up mischief in the Navy; he was a good speaker; he always held his audience; he carried conviction and met with success, and for the next four days was overwhelmed with congratulations. The Admiralty were delighted, and the First Lord now plucked up courage to answer Commander Carlyon Bellairs in the House of Commons that there was no intention of changing the First Sea Lord, who had the full confidence of the Government, a statement received with cheers.

Not that he clung to his appointment—far from it.

Called to the Admiralty against his wish, he had been appointed First Sea Lord under stress of war, and thus found himself in a position contrary alike to his tastes and his interests. He was an outdoor man; he hated office work. His former appointments had enabled him to satisfy his craving for fresh air and exercise; in Egypt he had been able to ride, to bathe, to play golf and tennis. For the last eighteen months, with the exception of his visits to Paris, with more office work, he had never been further than from the Mall House to the Admiralty, while having to keep up a large establishment with constant entertaining on extremely inadequate pay was proving a financial strain far heavier than he could bear.

But these dastardly attacks had roused his combative spirit, his determination not to give in.

Life was beginning to flow once more in pre-war channels, State banquets at Buckingham Palace, luncheons at the Guildhall, memorial services, dinners, public and private, crowded one on another, but with a deep undercurrent of unrest and discontent.

The Labour situation seemed fraught with peril; there were fears of a fresh police strike, riots at Epsom, where Colonial soldiers had stormed the police station and murdered a constable; terrific riots at Malta, where houses had been burnt down and many shot; strikes all over the country.

Nor were the actions of the Great Four—now reduced to the Great Three—exempt from unpleasant surprises.

On President Wilson appealing over the head of their Government to the Italian people on the question of Fiume, their delegates had withdrawn from the Conference, a course universally approved of; but during their absence, and behind their backs, the Great Three had contrived a plot to land Greek troops at Smyrna. Wemyss had refused to send ships to convoy this expedition, convinced should they be

attacked they would defend themselves and thus bring on war with Italy. Fortunately, the Italians getting wind of it, the scheme was dropped for the moment, only to be revived later on with disastrous consequences.

On June 21st Wemyss and his wife were at lunch at the Mall House, amongst their guests being Admiral Heaton Ellis, just come from Paris to ask Wemyss to smooth matters over with the new Chief of the French Naval Staff, when Wemyss was called to the telephone. The Germans were scuttling their ships at Scapa Flow! But, as he wrote next day to Admiral Hope:

I look upon the sinking of the German Fleet as a real blessing. It disposes once for all of the thorny question of the distribution of these ships and eases us of an enormous amount of difficulties.

It appears that the German Admiral thought that the Armistice expired at noon on Saturday, and consequently believed he was not breaking the terms of Armistice. There was not a moment during which they could not have done this, though I must confess that I was beginning to think that they never would do it. We were all prepared to seize the ships as arranged, but they forestalled us by forty-eight hours.

I do not know what the opinion in Paris will be; probably they will be rather sick; but as I said before, it is a happy conclusion. As you know, the terms only interned these ships, and did not make them our property. I suppose there will be an outcry at the beginning, but when the facts of the case become known, I think that everybody will probably think like me, "Thank the Lord."

Excitement was great on both sides of the Channel; frantic messages from the British delegation, where Mr. Balfour appeared greatly perturbed; violent newspaper clamour both English and French; questions and attacks on the Admiralty in the House of Commons. Wemyss alone remained calm and unruffled, for he had his answer ready. He recalled how during the Armistice negotiations he and Admiral de Bon had pressed for the surrender of the ships, pointing out the

possibility of what had just occurred, but how they had been overruled by Lloyd George, Admiral Benson, *and* Marshal Foch, who insisted on internment. These were the facts; there was no gainsaying them.

Agitation subsided as quickly as it had arisen, while in a debate in the House of Commons on June 25th Wemyss was triumphantly justified.

His vindication was complete, and the German ships, those apples of discord, safe at the bottom of the sea.

A pleasant interlude during this week of perturbations had been his visit to Oxford to receive his D.C.L. degree in company of Marshal Joffre, General Haig, General Pershing, Admiral Beatty, Mr. Hoover, and many others, and where he and his wife enjoyed the most pleasant and cordial hospitality of the Warden of New College, Canon and Mrs. Spooner. Oxford delighted him; he had never been there before and everything interested and amused him; the Colleges, the Dons, his scarlet Doctor's robes and velvet toque, which made him look like Henry VIII, the ceremony itself with the gorgeous apparition of Lord Curzon as Chancellor in gold train, garter and all; the luncheon at All Souls, the dinner and "gaudy" at Christ Church; Balliol College, so associated with his father-in-law, Sir Robert Morier. It was a glimpse into another world for him—a world far removed from Admiralties, Peace Conferences, and Politicians.

During all this time the one great anxiety overshadowing everything else had been, Would the Germans sign or not? And if not:

To reconstitute a formal blockade (Wemyss had written to Admiral Hope on June 6th) is in my opinion, as you know, not only useless but really impossible.

Count Brockdorff Rantzau and the members of his delegation, it was known, had refused to sign. Would others be found willing? Up to the very last day doubt was to subsist.

We are going through a very critical time (Wemyss wrote on June 16th to Admiral Culme-Seymour), the ultimatum is to be presented to the Germans in Paris to-day, and if they do not sign by next Saturday we automatically find ourselves again in a state of war. Opinions seem to be divided as to whether the enemy will sign or whether they will not.

But on June 23rd the Germans accepted the Peace terms, news received with listless apathy by a public wearied by the protracted negotiations.

The signing of the Peace was to take place at Versailles on Saturday June 28th.

I had hurried over to Paris from London on purpose to be present on this historical occasion, and drove out to Versailles in a motor-car with G. Hope. Groups of people thronged the roads and cheered the more or less distinguished personages as they drove by. Our naval uniforms were quite sufficient to ensure us a warm welcome from them all. The crowds grew in density as we approached Versailles, and the spectacle as we drove up to the Palace by the Place d'Armes was truly magnificent. That enormous space was lined by troops, mostly cavalry, whose smart, new light-blue uniforms, together with the pennons of the lancers, gave a wonderful air of animation and brightness to the scene. Soldiers, soldiers by the thousands, and they in gala uniforms and unprepared for the trenches! After four years of khaki and the atmosphere of battle to find oneself suddenly in such a scene gave me an odd feeling of unreality, and I almost imagined myself as a figure belonging to some historical picture that should have been hanging on the walls of a National Gallery and wondered whether I really was taking part in a living incident.

The Generals and their Staffs were on their horses in front of their troops, and they looked splendid in their brave new uniforms and their breasts covered with decorations. A pause in the procession of cars caused ours to stop right under the nose of one of them, and I congratulated him heartily on the happy events of the day. He was radiant, and in thanking me one could see that his words were no empty phrase, and that to him this event was more than a

mere pageant. How could either of us suspect that the Treaty about to be signed, bad though I considered many of its clauses, was to turn out *so* bad?

On entering the Palace all ideas of dignity or solemnity vanished. The arrangements were atrocious, and from the foot of the staircase right up to the Galerie des Glaces was a struggling mass of perspiring men and women elbowing and pushing their way. They might well have been taken for a crowd outside a cinema theatre were it not for the fact that many of them were high dignitaries in uniform. Nor were matters much better within the famous Galerie itself. Any lingering hope that I might have had of the scene being worthy of the occasion was shattered directly I entered. In the middle of the Gallery were three long tables, placed so as to form three sides of a square. In the centre of the middle one, facing the windows, was the seat reserved for Clemenceau, and the other signatories were grouped to the right and to the left. These tables were railed off from the remainder of the room, which was filled with rows and rows of cane-bottomed chairs, giving the Hall, except for its size, the appearance of having been prepared for a village concert. The crowd, alas! was worthy of the arrangements.

The German delegates in themselves cut but a sorry figure. Clothed in ill-fitting frock-coats, they came into the vast Hall looking more like miserable criminals than anything else. No one went into that Hall more convinced of the culpable manner in which the war had been waged by Germany than I, and yet from the moment these men entered I felt humiliated by the vulgarity and inquisitiveness of the crowd, by the lack of dignity of the surroundings, and by the manner in which the Germans were received. Surely the greater wrong they had wrought the greater should have been our restraint in this, the supreme hour of our victory. I felt a conviction that those men in the moment of their humiliation cannot but have felt that the manner in which we were crowning our victory was unworthy, and it was a horrible thought that they should be able to think us unworthy.

My eye caught a glimpse of Dunraven* in the distance. He had been present when William I had been proclaimed

* The fourth Earl; *d.* 1926.

German Emperor in this very Hall. I think he must have been the only person present at both of these historical occasions, and I felt I should have liked to have known his thoughts.

Clemenceau's speech was not inspiring, though well delivered, and I thought his tone of reproach unsuitable though perhaps under the circumstances natural.

During the time that the signature was being affixed, some people—I believe they were Americans—produced autograph books and actually got the Germans' signatures!

The assembly broke up with as little ceremony and order as it had opened, and making my way out to the gardens where the fountains were playing I found myself far from being in the jubilant mood which would have been natural to the occasion. Democracy does not tend to dignity.

The Treaty of Paris contained a clause by which the Emperor William was to be tried, and Lloyd George announced in Parliament that the trial would take place in London. Wemyss never hesitated to denounce unsparingly a proposal which he looked upon as nothing less than an insult to the King, whose near kinsman the Emperor was, a view he found shared by many. When Holland refused the Emperor's extradition, relief was general; the Allies, it was felt, were being spared at least one of the consequences of their folly.

July saw peace celebrations and thanksgiving services.

To Wemyss, standing near the King in front of the Royal Pavilion under Queen Victoria's monument, the sight of the great Peace Procession on July 19th coming sweeping down the Mall appeared marvellous indeed.

Headed by General Pershing on a magnificent charger, with the American troops marching like Prussian guardsmen, these were followed by French cavalry, equally fine, and Marshal Foch looking the typical French Marshal whose gesture as he passed the King and lowered his baton was dramatic without being theatrical; then the various Allies—nations new and old, the Italians being particularly well

received—Admiral Beatty and the Navy, all the Admirals on foot headed by their flags—how gladly would Wemyss have been among them!—General Haig and the Army, while the massed flags fluttering in the breeze as the procession wended its way up the Mall made it look like a huge tapestry on a sixteenth-century picture of the “Ligue.”

But the day was not to end as happily as it had begun. By the afternoon tidings had reached of an outbreak of revolutionary strikes in Yorkshire, revealing a situation of such gravity that fears were entertained that unless quelled within the week Bolshevism might get the upper hand and the movement become universal.

Roused in the middle of the following night by a frantic colonel of Marines clamouring for more stokers to pump out the mines, Wemyss lost no time next day to hurry into the City, where the Lord Mayor and Corporation were feasting the Bluejackets, he went round all the tables, spoke to the men, and soon ascertained how loyal and true was their spirit and how much the Navy appeared the one force in the country which really could be depended on.

Two days later the news from Archangel that the Russian troops had mutinied, putting our Expeditionary Force into great peril, added to the difficulties of an already sorely tried Government, who between mutinies in Russia and strikes at home was in a perplexing position altogether.

And during all that time peace celebrations were continuing. Banquets, Balls, a great Naval Review, festivities without end.

On July 23rd he had gone to Cambridge to receive his LL.D. degree.

There now remained the final act—the allotting of war honours and rewards. And over this there arose a controversy.

*I think that the officers of the Grand Fleet were genuinely afraid that the absence of a Naval victory would, by

comparison with the work of the Army, have the effect of creating in the mind of the nation an impression that the Navy had played no conspicuous part in the war, and had but little share in bringing about the victory of the Allies, a possibility which I also contemplated and which induced me to strongly recommend that honours and rewards equal to those bestowed on Sir Douglas Haig should be awarded to Sir David Beatty. The Prime Minister had at one time proposed only recommending him for a Viscounty, but when he asked me what I recommended I told him that for public reasons I considered that Beatty should be offered an Earldom. It was difficult to get the right balance, for certain it is that the latter's services could in no manner be individually compared to those of Sir Douglas Haig, but there is no doubt but that had Sir David merely been made a Viscount that the Navy would have considered it a slur on the Service as a whole.

Mr. Long told Wemyss on this occasion that he was to receive a Viscounty and a money grant.

He was worn out. For five years now he had borne, without intermission, the burden of overwhelming responsibility, of incessant labour. The Canadian Convoy, Gallipoli, Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Admiralty with the Anti-Submarine Campaign and the Peace Conference—not one holiday, not one rest—his strength and endurance were coming to an end, his health beginning to give way. He longed for Wemyss, for a sight of the sea, for a breath of fresh air.

More peace celebrations, more Board meetings, more War Cabinets, more riots (this time at Liverpool), a visit to Portsmouth with the King and he was free. He left for Wemyss that same night, August 5th, where his family had preceded him. He was looking forward rapturously to his holiday, to seeing his nephew Michael Wemyss who a few months previously had married Lady Victoria Cavendish Bentinck, for both of whom he cherished great affection, to his old friends, to all his associations. Arrived at Kirkcaldy Station he saw a paper with the war honours' list and opened it. Sir Douglas

Haig, Sir David Beatty were created Earls, Sir J. Jellicoe a Viscount; the Chiefs of the Army, the Air Service, the Generals, the Admirals, down to the Secretary of the War Cabinet, all received the thanks of the Nation, their due meed of honours and grants—all, with one exception only: alone amongst the war leaders he was neither thanked, nor honoured, nor rewarded.

It was the disavowal of his whole policy, the negation not only of his own services but those of the Board of Admiralty, of all those who had worked with him during his tenure of office.

To this there could be but one reply; within the hour he had given it.

In sending in his resignation to the First Lord he took occasion to point out that

when two years ago I was called to the Admiralty I obeyed that call with the utmost reluctance and only because I considered it my duty to accede to the wishes of the Government in time of war; a reluctance the greater as it entailed my giving up my appointment as Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, an appointment I had long wished for and which fulfilled all my aspirations.

It is not for me to say whether my appointment was justified, but during the last ten months of the war I carried out the duties of First Sea Lord to the best of my abilities, which duties were rendered all the more strenuous owing to the frequent absences of the late First Lord, Sir Eric Geddes, from the Admiralty, when the whole responsibility rested on my shoulders.

What measure of success I achieved I leave to the Nation to judge; that I have not succeeded in pleasing the Government is evident.

It is for this reason that I place my resignation in your hands and hope that a successor more suitable to them may be found.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for the cordial manner in which you have consistently helped me during the last very difficult eight months, and above

all for your very generous collaboration in our efforts to ameliorate the pay and condition of the officers and men of the Navy.

When writing to the King later on to announce his resignation, he entered more fully into its reasons, referring to

the attacks that have been made on the Admiralty for many a month past, and of the intrigues which have been going on to oust me from my position of First Sea Lord. These attacks and intrigues have never been publicly refuted except in one statement in the House of Commons that I held the confidence of the Government, and one official denial that I was leaving the Admiralty. This undoubtedly weakened my position in the eyes of the public, but not to such an extent as to make it a matter of concern. When, however, in the list of war honours my name did not appear—an omission all the more marked because the War Office, Air Ministry, and War Cabinet were all included and the Admiralty alone left out—this constituted such a blow to my prestige and to that of the Admiralty, and was felt as such I know by many others, that the only course left to me was to resign, which I accordingly have done.

The office of First Sea Lord has no special attraction for me, and is one that I never would have accepted under ordinary circumstances, but, called to it as I was in war-time, it was of course my duty to undertake it.

I should have been quite content to go after the war came to an end had I not been strongly of the opinion that the Admiralty should be represented at the Peace Conference by nobody but the First Sea Lord, and also that of the tasks I had set myself to perform, two—the reorganization of the Naval Staff and putting the Naval Pay on a satisfactory footing—had yet to be accomplished.

This has now been done and I can look back with no small gratification on the success which has crowned my efforts.

The day on which I took over the duties of First Sea Lord marked the turning-point of the Naval War. The steady diminution of the submarine menace from that time—the offensive spirit which I introduced, the most marked manifestations of which were the attacks on Zeebrugge and

Ostend, the offensive mining campaign led directly to the collapse of the enemy Naval campaign, and I can therefore lay down my task with the feeling that I have carried out my duties to the satisfaction of the nation.

This mitigates though it cannot quite obliterate the sorrow which it is to me to see my Naval career terminated at the comparatively early age of fifty-five and my consequent retirement from the Service to which I have wholeheartedly devoted forty years of my life.

But the First Lord refused to accept his resignation, whether from fear of outcry or desire of retaining his services. Wemyss persisted, and after an exchange of telegrams and telephone messages wearily took the train back to London.

Every effort was now made to press him to reconsider his decision. The First Lord, the Lords of the Admiralty, his friends all begged him to remain on; it was pointed out that his motives would be misconstrued and lay him open to the suspicion of acting from personal pique. He finally consented, not indeed to withdraw his resignation, for he was determined to go, but to hold it over for a couple of months.

Besides, he had no desire to end his career on a scandal and become the subject of controversy or more newspaper polemics.

He returned to Scotland for his holiday, begun under such infelicitous circumstances.

He was looking very ill; his health was causing no little anxiety to those who loved him; indeed, the origin of the disease which was afterwards to carry him off dated from that time.

But Wemyss, there where his ancestors had lived and laboured and now lay at rest, had always been a stimulant—a beacon of light calling to him in hours of darkness and despondency, and so it was to be again.

In his native air, amid the simple folk with their unaffected patriotism, who had offered their sacrifice with such wholehearted loyalty and devotion, he began to recover physical

health and moral equilibrium. While entering with zest into all the local peace celebrations, he forgot his own troubles and let his mind dwell rather on the heroism and gallantry displayed during the war than on its aftermath of intrigue and self-seeking.

A happy interlude of short duration.

Ten days later he was again being summoned to the Admiralty—this time to discuss naval estimates. The American shipbuilding programme was responsible for their having risen to 160 million pounds—a panic had ensued; the Government desired they should be cut down to 60 millions, every economy which could possibly be devised was to be put in practice.

When in London he was to receive news of one of the most brilliant and heroic exploits of the whole war, redounding as greatly to the credit of Admiral Sir W. Cowan in command of the Baltic Squadron, who had planned it, as of those who were to carry it out.

A flotilla of motor-boats had broken into the harbour of Kronstadt and torpedoed the Bolshevik Fleet lying there behind its defences.

For long Wemyss had called the attention of the Cabinet to the position of our Squadron in the Baltic, where the Bolsheviks were displaying considerable naval activity and seemed determined on offensive operations, while to their heavy forces, consisting of two dreadnoughts and armoured cruisers, we could only oppose light cruisers. When it came to Russia, it seemed quite impossible to induce the Government to formulate any policy whatsoever.

In vain did the Admirals commanding our scattered naval forces, whether at Archangel or in the Caspian or the Baltic, clamour for instructions, he could only write as to Admiral Green at Archangel (March 24th 1919):

Alas, what you say about the lack of instructions is absolutely true. You are not the only person who feels it. Every

department that has to deal with Russia is complaining, and we find ourselves in some difficulty in contending with the situation in the Baltic for that very reason. The fact of the matter is that the Government do not know what policy to put forward.

In view, however, of impending danger and actual losses he at length placed before the Cabinet the alternative of either withdrawing our forces from the Baltic altogether or allowing them to attack, and succeeded in obtaining a grudging consent to the latter.

Armed with this he was now able to authorize Admiral Cowan to proceed with his planned operation.

In a very gallant action on July 17th Lieutenant Agar had torpedoed the armoured cruiser *Oleg* from a coastal motor-boat, and now a flotilla of these were towed by destroyers all the way from Sheerness to Björko, a distance of 1,400 miles, with the loss of only one, while the *Vindictive*, an aircraft carrier, arrived with twelve machines and established a small sea and airplane base.

Taking full advantage of the element of surprise, the flotilla, under the command of Commander Dobson, started off on August 18th, a calm night, and advancing from the eastern direction, the one least expected, penetrated into the harbour, while a simultaneous bombing attack by aircraft on the forts and inner defences facilitated their task, the noise of the aircraft engines drowning that of the motor-boat engines. The attack proved brilliantly successful—the two dreadnoughts, the submarine depôt ship were all torpedoed. Our losses were heavy, for of the seven boats to reach the scene of action three were lost; while of their gallant commanding officers two—Lieutenant-Commander Brade and Lieutenant Darrell Reed—were killed, and two—Lieutenant Napier and Lieutenant Bremner—sunk and taken prisoners. But the success obtained was out of all proportion: Bolshevik naval action in the Baltic ceased to exist.

Wemyss was filled with enthusiasm. Writing to Admiral Cowan on August 26th he said:

I have been awaiting further news of your brilliant action before writing to you, but can wait no longer to congratulate you and all concerned. It appears to have been an extraordinarily gallant and successful attack, and I am in hopes that as a result we may get some permanent relief from the strain of the Baltic. . . . I have, as you can imagine, been thinking about you and yours constantly, and I think I can realize the difficulties of your situation. You probably also realize how almost impossible it is to get real help or guidance from our so-called Cabinet with their slipshod methods and want of definite policy which inevitably leads to difficulties. The permission for you to attack was obtained, so to speak, on a snap vote and I took the opportunity. But they don't, won't, or can't understand the situation. I shall write again, in the meantime only send this short line of hearty congratulation.

Wemyss' satisfaction at so gallant an exploit was far from being shared by the Cabinet; the Admiral sent over to announce it met, greatly to his surprise, with an anything but cordial reception; for, as it turned out, while openly disavowing the Bolsheviks, they had been secretly negotiating with them, and the sinking of their Fleet was the last thing they desired.

More than anything else this incident caused Wemyss to realize that, given all his life to plain, straightforward dealing, to adjust himself to such policies was an impossibility.

Returned to Wemyss, he therefore on August 20th sent in his formal resignation to the First Lord.

To this he awaited a reply, but so far in vain. It was only a month later when the First Lord returned from a yachting trip on the *Enchantress* that he was to learn, greatly to his astonishment, that the latter had never forwarded his letter to the Prime Minister. Did Wemyss really mean to go?

Mr. Long's desire to retain his services was flattering, but, as he full well knew, not shared by his colleagues.

When during a final interview with the Prime Minister on September 24th the latter intimated to him intentions of "scrapping the Navy," when the rumour reached him that Lord Grey on his mission to Washington had actually been given written instructions by the Foreign Office to voluntarily cede our Naval Supremacy to the U.S., he began to suspect that the Cabinet might be contemplating some such renunciation. The psychological moment had indeed come for him to go, for never, First Sea Lord, would he lend himself to resign that Naval Supremacy which to obtain and maintain Great Britain had fought and striven for more than 300 years and for which generations of Englishmen had laid down their lives.

He wondered what his successor's way of thinking on the matter was likely to be.

Not that he had much time to devote to this or other meditations. A general railway strike, long foreseen, had been declared on September 27th, and he was again overwhelmed with work—committees on food transport, unrest, measures of protection. A Squadron was ordered to Southend to await emergency and ready to disembark men; Squadrons for Glasgow, for Ireland; ships for Liverpool. He had arranged that orders were to be given to the Fleet that work was to be divided into two categories—necessary work, such as manning pumping stations, dock gates, etc., which the bluejackets had to do, while running trains and everything else was voluntary. The entire Fleet volunteered. The strike ran its course; it did not degenerate into a general strike, as feared at one time, nor create disorder. He derived no little amusement from the ill-concealed terror of some of the Ministers, who seemed confidently to expect to find Mr. Cramp, the strike leader, installed in Downing Street in lieu of the Prime Minister.

On Sunday October 5th the strike came to an end.

He could now devote himself to settling his affairs before

his departure, which was rapidly approaching. His last days were crowded. He went down to Portsmouth to stay with the First Lord on board the *Enchantress*—to Osborne College, his old haunt.

I spent the day there quite interestingly. The service was delightful, and the singing as good as you would expect in a Cathedral;

. . . and paid a visit to Sheffield for the Cutlers' feast, where he made a speech announcing his resignation.

The two principal tasks which since the Armistice he had set himself out to perform had been achieved: the Naval Pay had been placed on a satisfactory basis—the reorganization of the Naval Staff successfully accomplished.

At the outbreak of the war, the Board of Admiralty, reconstituted in 1832 by Sir J. Graham, the then First Lord, to meet the demand for economy, had stood the test of eighty years of peace, but had never been tried in war until in 1914, when, although it did not break, it had proved itself, as it was only to be expected, incapable of dealing with the vast and complex matters which arose.

Although for some years a cry for the formation of a Naval Staff had arisen, and with some difficulty a nucleus had been formed, the want of experienced naval officers, or of any written evidence from predecessors, had caused it to remain for practical purposes non-existent. It was only at the end of 1917 that, through stress of war, the peace organization of the Board was finally discarded and replaced by what was in reality a modern adaptation of the old organization of the Napoleonic period, without many of its defects and disadvantages.

Wemyss' last days in office were spent in drawing up a memorandum on Admiralty organization. Though not claiming that perfection had been found, he thought the right system had been evolved and that if the principle of

this system were kept in view and persevered in, through the searching school of experience, a position would have been reached where an efficient, a sufficient and workable Naval Staff could be said to exist.

Ever striving to take advantage of the lessons of the war, he scrupulously respected historical truth.

When the controversy over the Battle of Jutland was raging, he had pointed out to Mr. Long, newly come to office (January 1919) how desirable, even necessary, it would be to have a detailed record of the battle from the historical point of view compiled for the information of the public, so as to assist them in forming an opinion upon a somewhat involved subject. He therefore suggested that a suitable post captain should be attached to the Operations Division of the Naval Staff for the purpose of preparing this record.

On February 6th Captain J. E. T. Harper, who had been selected, and his assistants commenced their work.

His instructions were to prepare a record, with plans showing in chronological order what had actually occurred at the battle; no comment or criticism was to be included and no oral evidence accepted. All statements made in the record were to be in accordance with available documentary evidence, whether British or foreign.

Wemyss' opinion was that such a record of *actual* facts, with no embellishment, would prevent unfair criticism, because all those who wished to write their opinions of the battle would have true facts on which to base their arguments.

This record, completed on October 3rd, was, owing to his absence in Paris and other delays, not submitted to his formal approval before leaving the Admiralty on November 1st. The advent of the new Board with Lord Beatty as First Sea Lord caused its publication to be first delayed and finally suppressed.

Though the primary object, the enlightening of the public, had not been attained, Wemyss never doubted that in times to come this record would prove a valuable source of information to future naval historians.

In Paris he took official leave of all those with whom for the last two years he had worked in such close and friendly collaboration—Marshal Foch, Clemenceau, M. Leygues, the Minister of Marine, and others—who, one and all, loud in their regrets, deplored the loss of one who had ever proved himself so loyal a colleague, so staunch an upholder of the Anglo-French Alliance.

His wife, who was paying a flying visit to Cannes to prepare their home for their reception, now joined him, and together they returned to the Mall House, already begun to be dismantled.

The last few days were spent in leave-takings and farewells.

To Admiral Hope, now in command of the Third Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean, he had written on October 24th:

By the time you get this I shall probably have ceased to function at the Admiralty since I clear out on 1st November. I am sure you will not be surprised at this step on my part knowing as you do what my ideas are on the subject. First of all, let me tell you that on calmly looking back over my tenure of office I realize how much I owe you for the splendid help that you gave me all through the war, especially in Paris. You know as well as I do the internal pressure that was brought to bear for others to go there, and you know how determined I was that the only person who could be there was the First Sea Lord. Had it not been for you and the assistance you gave me, it is doubtful whether that principle, which was so vital, could have been carried out. And with all my heart I thank you. . . .

It may interest you to know that I am writing what I hope will be a useful and interesting memorandum on the subject of Admiralty organization and how to expand it for war-time. There is nobody who has the same experience now

that I have in these matters, and if only that step had been taken by the First Sea Lord in the year 1832, when the present constitution of the Board was evolved, we might not have had those tremendous difficulties which the Admiralty found themselves up against at the opening of the war.

And to Admiral Sir A. Duff, so closely associated with the Anti-Submarine Campaign, now Commander-in-Chief, China:

Oct. 31, 1919. I am writing to you on the last day of my tenure of this room, where you and I have had so many interesting conversations. I know you will not have been surprised to hear that I was leaving the Admiralty. I often spoke to you on the subject, and some weeks ago I came to the conclusion that the psychological moment had come for me to go.

My last official act has been to recommend you for a G.C.M.G., a pleasure which I always had in mind, but which I judged was better to put off until I left than earlier. If I may be allowed to say so, it is at least a recognition on my part that your work has been equal to that of any officer commanding a Battle Squadron. Really such work as you have done cannot be weighed by such baubles, but there are some of us who realized what you went through during the war and how triumphantly you emerged.

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Though delighted to leave the Admiralty, I am truly sorry when the moment comes to bring to an end my active career in the Service, the last two years of which have been so intensely full of interest and so helped by that splendid and cordial co-operation which I received from everybody on the Board. We saw some difficult times together, but thank God we emerged, and I can honestly say that I leave my post with a satisfactory feeling that I have in no way let down the country, the Service, or the Admiralty.

The work of the First Sea Lord in the future lies in very different grooves to those during my tenure of office, and I really could not contemplate it with satisfaction. It will require a different mentality to cope with it to that which I

have got, or, at any rate, to what I have acquired after the work of the last two years.

I am going to spend the winter in the South of France, and now when I look back over the last five and a half years I realize that not for one moment have I ever been without responsibility, and the lifting of that responsibility will, no doubt, be a pleasant change.

When he woke up next morning, on November 1st, he said he felt as if an Alp had been lifted off his shoulders; he had never realized before how crushing had been the burden.

He had been promoted Admiral of the Fleet, which gave him great satisfaction, all the more for the approbation it evoked:

My promotion to Admiral of the Fleet has called forth extraordinarily nice letters from naval officers, who one and all seem heartily pleased. I think they appreciate what has been done for them.

He was now offered a peerage, which he was loath to accept. He had, for professional reasons, greatly resented his omission from the War Honours List, but, as he wrote to the First Lord:

Not having received it (the peerage) at the same time as the others, it is now meaningless.

A peerage in itself had no value for him. Nevertheless, being assured on every side how undesirable it would be in the eyes of the Service that the First Sea Lord under whose tenure of office the war had come to a successful conclusion should remain unrewarded, he reluctantly consented, only stipulating to Mr. Long that the peerage as originally promised should be a Viscounty and be gazetted on November 11th, the first anniversary of the Armistice.

It had long been a source of mortification to him that whereas, on the signing of the Armistice, the French Government had bestowed on him their highest honour, the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, he had never received the slightest recognition for his services on that occasion from

his own Government, who almost ostentatiously had ignored the part he and the Navy had played in this great triumph, to him the crowning event of his career.

But he was gazetted a Baron on November 22nd.

He was longing to leave.

How glad we shall all be (he had written not long before) to get away from London. I *loathe* all this intrigue, I *loathe* seeing my name bandied about in print and discussed.

At the same time there were still arrangements to be made—festivities to be got through. The President of the French Republic and Madame Poincaré were paying a State visit to London which involved banquets at Buckingham Palace, at the French Embassy, a luncheon at Guildhall.

On November 13th the First Lord gave a great dinner at the House of Commons in Wemyss' honour, to which the King had deputed Prince Albert (the Duke of York) and from which the Prime Minister had had the grace to excuse himself.

On the following night he was entertained by the Foreign Naval Attachés.

Greeted everywhere with the greatest cordiality, sympathy, and affection, his departure excited universal regret, and though to the last he kept up his gay demeanour, his infectious laugh, yet never did smiling face cover a heavier heart.

He was broken-hearted at leaving the Service to which for over forty years he had been so entirely devoted. He could not help feeling bitterly that had he followed his own inclinations rather than the dictates of his conscience his career would not thus, at the age of fifty-five, have come to an abrupt conclusion, and he might still have had before him many years of happy and fruitful activity.

On November 23rd they left for Paris.

As he watched from the deck of the steamer the fast-

receding shore, his thoughts reverted to that morning just a year ago when he had landed there straight from the Armistice, so full of pride, of joy, of hope—and now . . .

But the white cliffs of England soon sunk out of sight and with them the memory of all the mortifications, the disappointments, the troubles, and vexations of the last twelve-month; his was not a nature to nourish resentment.

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CHAPTER XV

LEISURE

FOR months his one desire had been to escape from an atmosphere antagonistic and distasteful to him in the highest degree. Crossed at every important turn by the politicians, his whole last year at the Admiralty had been one long fight against opposition and intrigue; he had played his part as befitted the traditions of his family and race—played it honourably, courageously, and with success.

As a young man he had chosen as his motto

Steer a straight course in deed and in thought
Let God be your pilot and wisdom your port.*

From this he never deviated.

He left the Admiralty poorer in health, poorer in pocket, and the poorer of many illusions, but ever having “steered a straight course in deed and in thought.”

The peerage thrust upon him had involved, greatly to his dissatisfaction, a change of name. Wemyss of Methil, his first idea, proved impossible, the Earl of Wemyss sitting in the House of Lords as Baron Wemyss of Methil. The only alternative appeared to be Burntisland, the title bestowed upon his ancestor Sir J. Wemyss, the husband of Margaret Countess of Wemyss in her own right, daughter of Earl David; but this he disliked. Fortunately in the old Charters of Wemyss was discovered the ancient Barony of Wester Wemyss merged in 1511 with that of Easter Wemyss into Wemyss, and it was this title which he accordingly assumed.

It was therefore as Lord Wester Wemyss that he returned to Monbrillant, the home which he and his family had left in May 1914 and at times despaired of ever seeing again. It was unchanged, though neglected—the garden, once their pride, an overgrown wilderness—but still a very haven of

* Engraved on his bookplate.

peace and rest after the last stormy five and a half years, and as he wrote a few months later, "I thank God for its beauties and its quiet."

Cannes was no longer the same; a few of their friends still remained, but the war had left many gaps—some were dead, others ruined, "enemy" villas sequestered.

But the climate, the sun, the walks he had so longed for were unchanged. He gardened, he played at golf, at tennis, at bridge, and when spring came had apparently quite recovered his health, put away and forgotten the vicissitudes of the last few years, and was his bright, cheerful self again.

At the end of April he set off to Paris and London.

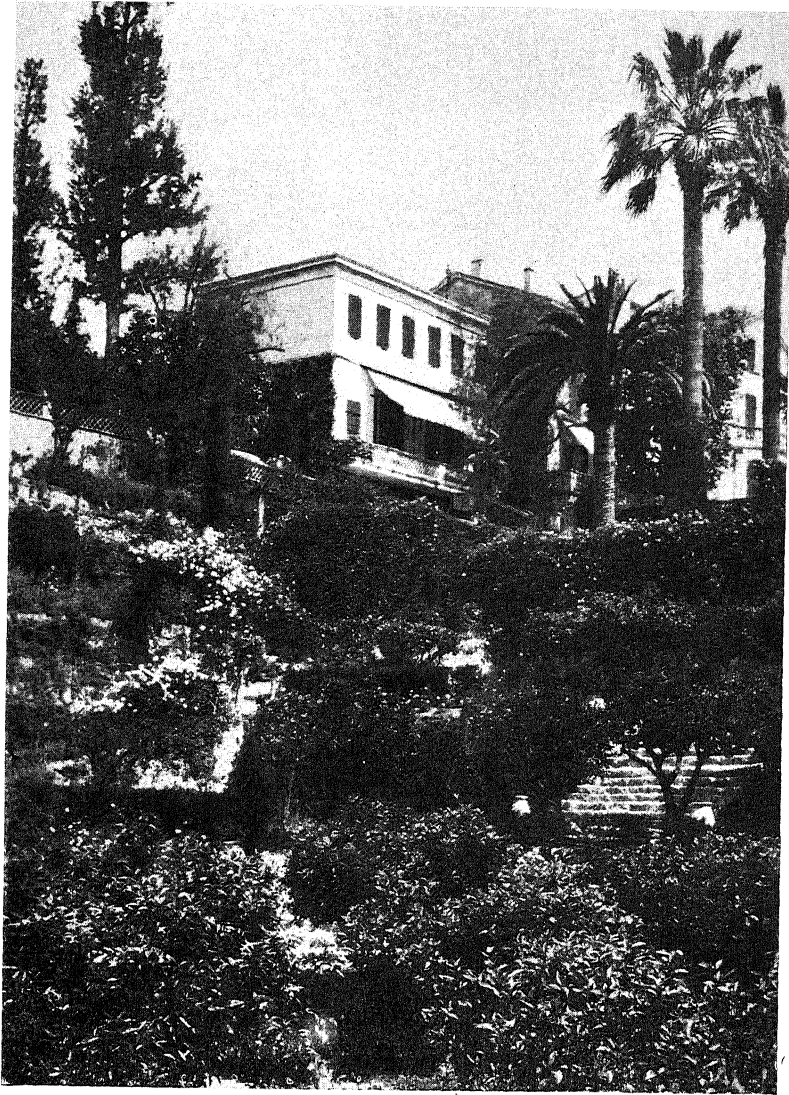
Though held in near vicinity few echoes of the San Remo Conference had reached his peaceful retreat—but Paris was resounding with them:

X who came to see me this afternoon (April 30th) tells me Lloyd George was so rude to Foch at San Remo that he was surprised that he didn't return to Paris by the next train, that the naval and military advisers were entirely put on one side, and that Lloyd George has immensely lost prestige by this last council where his autocratic methods exhibiting ignorance and pig-headedness were dreadful. . . . Although the Turks are to come this month to Paris to receive the Treaty, the frontiers are not yet settled and according to X never will be.

And on May 2nd:

It appears that the Turkish Treaty is one which cannot be carried out without a large number of troops—that the English estimate was 200,000 men, that Lloyd George said "Bosh, ask Foch," and that Foch then said 300,000. That Lloyd George and Co. again said "Bosh; we know better than you. There's the Treaty, and it must be carried out without any men."

Of all the disastrous results of the Peace of Versailles the Turkish Treaty appeared to him the one most fraught with immediate danger. He had not spent his war years in the



[Photo: Richard, Cannes]

VILLA MONBRILLANT, CANNES

East in vain; he could gauge the relative strength of Turks and Greeks and was convinced that our Ministers were heading straight for a catastrophe. But how stop them?

When he arrived in England, however, he found no one thought about Turkey—Ireland was the one and only pre-occupation.

May 9. . . . A, with whom I dined to-night, told me that the Irish Peers had been asked *not* to take any part in the Irish debate, because they said they would probably be assassinated at the first opportunity if they did! The Law has actually tumbled to pieces there and the King's Writ does not run. All the police barracks have been burnt out, so that the wretched men have nowhere to go to. Murders are committed in broad daylight and nobody dare denounce the assassins—nobody really wants Home Rule or anything else—it is blind hatred fostered and fed from America. Lord French says he can't interfere because it is political and the Viceroy must not be partisan! Did you ever hear of such a state of affairs. It seems perfectly incredible.

He took his seat in the House of Lords.

May 12. . . . Took my seat, with Wemyss (the Earl of Wemyss) and Philip Stanhope (Lord Weardale) introducing me. Really I thought a very dignified ceremony. There were quite a lot of peers present and many came and congratulated me. . . . I quite enjoyed it and am looking forward to speaking one day. I don't think I should be in the least nervous.

May 17. My first letter written in the library of the House of Lords must be addressed to you. I find the atmosphere very congenial, for here at least is to be found dignity and freedom from a hustling world which is pleasant.

But the Turkish Treaty, with what he foresaw must be its almost inevitable outcome—more war, more misery, more bloodshed—was what his thoughts constantly reverted to, even during some pleasant weeks spent with a happy family party at Varenna, on Lake Como, which he much enjoyed,

notwithstanding the chaotic semi-revolutionary stage Italy was then passing through—strikes, riots at Milan, lack of transport and means of communication.

All the experience gained in the East made it his imperative duty, he felt, to lift up his voice in warning, for he knew that though

the Greeks at the present moment have advanced successfully against the Turks, and it is probable that they will do so for a time. They are well armed, well equipped, and have means of transport, but the task assigned for them is too great for their strength. Greece is a poor country and poorer since the war, since the hostile territories that she has acquired are a source of expense rather than income. She has been given the coast-line of Bulgaria which cuts that country off from the Aegean; she has been given areas in South Albania that she has not got the power to occupy, and with her trade diminishing and the great port of Salonica standing sick and idle, she has been given the task of conquering Turkey.

As for the Turks he considered that if the present position of the Turks is weak there are possibilities in the future which it is not safe to disregard, while in Turkey we are encouraging religious fanaticism, incurring the enmity of all those who are our natural friends and are also losing a market from which great reciprocal advantages would accrue.

His view would have been to abide by our promise to Turkey. The Greeks have been promised Smyrna, and injuriously as this will affect our interests it must in principle be conceded—but beyond that the Greeks have no claim to territory. Their occupation is a danger to themselves and to us, and whoever wins the Graeco-Turkish war the British taxpayer must inevitably lose.

He was strong in his conviction that if Great Britain is to hold her position in the world, the most important asset that she has is her honour. The advantages that come from victory are ephemeral; it is honour, justice, and fidelity to pledges that alone give permanent security.*

* Memorandum on Turkish Treaty.

He returned to England resolved to point out the dangers of the situation in the House of Lords, but again he found men's minds impervious apparently to aught but Ireland and Poland, invaded at that time by the Bolsheviks.

Poland is awful (he wrote). It is appalling to see how the Bolsheviks have been playing with us with their tongues in their cheeks all the time, and now that the time has come for the fulfilment of our promises of help how are we going to do it? Everyone seems to forget or ignore that every day our resources grow weaker and weaker and our prestige less and less. Think of England in December 1918 and England in August '20.

As, however, he thought the Turkish Treaty was on the point of being ratified, there was little time to lose.

It has been arranged (so he wrote to his wife detained by illness at Lausanne) that I am to call the attention of the House to the Turkish Treaty and "move for papers." The Treaty will *not* come up for ratification, so that is the only way open and the debate will probably take place on Wednesday, August 4th.

Addressing the House on that occasion he protested against the ratification of the Treaty, which contained little that was good and a great deal that was harmful. A study of the provisions convinced him that they were based on no line of policy, but that they had been reached by a process of compromising and abandoning all principles in the interests of expediency. Surely all the allied statesmen at Paris desired to eliminate as far as possible all the factors which made for war; but, if this were the case, how lamentably had they fallen short of the realization of their ideals. He ridiculed the idea that a local Parliament and an eventual plebiscite would benefit Smyrna, where racial feeling was so intense. Smyrna was, in spite of its large Greek population, a purely Turkish city. In Thrace they were creating an Eastern Alsace-Lorraine. The handing

over of predominantly Turkish Provinces would be looked on as a breach of faith by the Mahommedans and would outrage the feelings of millions of Indians.

Turkey, prostrate and defeated, had looked on the victorious Allies almost in the light of friends who would help her to set her house in order. Had a treaty framed on broad and liberal lines been put into force early in 1919 when the Young Turk Party was discredited and before the landing of the Greeks in Smyrna had brought the National Party into existence, affairs would now be very different.

This treaty, he said, which it had been hoped would eliminate war-creating factors, which would dispel chaos, on the contrary only multiplies the one and intensifies the other. And its makers, its parents, have entirely forgotten that, easy as it may be to alter a map, it is practically impossible to change either geography or human nature.

We sailors and soldiers have, he concluded, been accused of being callous as to whether a state of war existed or not. It has even been insinuated that we welcome war as an outlet for our activities and our ambitions. I am sure that it is quite unnecessary for me to refute such statements. But I will go further and say that if there is one section of the community which looks upon war with greater abhorrence than another it is probably that section of the community which has the honour of wearing H.M.'s uniform, whether it is blue or khaki. It is because I share those feelings with my comrades of the Navy and the Army that I look with dismay upon a Treaty which contains so many seeds fruitful of war. It has been said of the war from which we have just emerged that it was a war to end war. I fear that of this Treaty as a guide to the peace upon which we are about to enter, it can be much more aptly said that it is a peace to end peace.

That so outspoken a criticism should meet with approbation on the Government bench was not to be expected; but the vehemence of Lord Curzon's reply, whose indignation seemed particularly aroused by the fact that it was he

who had personally presided over a Conference of the representatives of the Allies endeavouring to work out a "reasonable and just" Treaty

astounded his auditors.

Wester Wemyss wrote to his wife immediately after the debate:

Yes, I think there is no doubt but that my speech was a real success. I certainly succeeded in "drawing blood" from G. Curzon, whose reply I listened to with amusement, recognizing as I did that he had been made uncommonly uncomfortable. He described my language as the most forcible that had ever been heard in the House of Lords, and rather intimated that it was not for me—a new peer—to criticize the Government. . . . I see that people are very angry with him and think that he should not have gone as far as he did; but my answer to that is that it only showed how much he had felt the attack. He afterwards came up to me and in a sort of a way excused himself for the line of conduct he had adopted, but, as I said to him, I didn't care—it rather in fact pleased me. Well, there is my maiden effort and it certainly has not been uneventful.

But though he had scored a personal triumph with his speech, yet, as he had to admit, of course it hadn't any effect upon the Treaty or the Government except to make them angry.

He had not to wait many years before seeing his gloomiest previsions realized. The disastrous campaign of the Greeks urged on and encouraged only to be abandoned in their hour of defeat; Chanak, where, confronted by the victorious forces of Mustapha Kemal, the British nation suddenly awoke to find itself again on the brink of war, the negotiations ending in the Treaty of Lausanne, which the Allies entered into as victors only after many unseemly squabbles amongst themselves to emerge as vanquished, were the humiliating results of what Lord Curzon had described as a "fair and just treaty."

Soon after the debate he had gone to stay with very old friends, Admiral Sir E. and Lady Alexander Sinclair, at Portsmouth.

Aug. 7. . . . It is rather odd finding oneself once again at Portsmouth under such very detached circumstances and to feel that I have nothing more to do with the Navy. What an extraordinary different world is the Navy to the remainder. It is of course in a sense narrow, but in these days of confusion and of unrest it is very delightful to see and *feel* something so solid and respectable.

Aug. 9. To-day I spent on board the *Eagle*, the latest thing in ships for aeroplanes, and saw some very interesting experiments. It felt quite odd being on board a man-of-war again and in plain clothes.

On his return to London he found everything here is excitement: the Prime Minister has just pronounced that we are to take "Naval Action." What naval action can be beyond blockade I cannot imagine, and Krassine was in the House of Commons listening to his speech. . . . Things are as bad as bad can be and the nation has no clear issue. G. Curzon is in a great state of excitement and nerves. It cannot be denied that we have befooled those wretched Poles even as the Bolsheviks have befooled us.

He spent the following winter at Cannes. Ever busying himself on many matters, he now took a leading part in all the interests pertaining to the local British community: the church, Sunny Bank Hospital, the various associations, became captain of the Golf Club. He gardened with zeal, trying to make good what he was wont to describe as their "devastated regions"; planned alterations to the house—a new library—while one of his greatest pleasures was entertaining his friends and those with whom he had been associated during the war.

In July he left for London, where he found the Irish crisis and the financial situation are—after lawn tennis and polo—what occupies everybody's minds. . . .

Irishmen are quite without hope of any satisfactory solution, even if so-called Peace is patched up, because they say Valera is quite incapable of delivering the goods. In the meantime I hear that preparations for "War" do not cease. . . .

July 9. . . . I quite enjoyed the ball at Buckingham Palace, seeing many people of all sorts and kinds. The person to whom I talked longest was the Duchess of St. Albans, who was extremely interesting about Ireland. So far as I can make out all the Southern Irish take much the same view of the situation. They all feel that the present negotiations are humiliating, but they could bear the humiliation if they could get Peace—satisfactory to anybody—arising from what is going on. They doubt de Valera's power, and think that even supposing we can offer or accept something possible, that he will immediately be shot by his own people, or rather by what they call the gunmen, who are absolutely beyond control—not a pleasant view, is it?

As for the Eastern Question, it seemed *in statu quo*—people evidently awaiting events, while

nobody will as yet listen or talk on the Turkish Question. I believe that it is quite true that Lloyd George privately has been encouraging the Greeks. . . . Aubrey Herbert, to whom I have talked much, is most anxious for me to take an active part in the Eastern Question, but I tell him quite openly that I can't afford to live in London, which he wants me to do. . . .

His naval career had left him financial embarrassments which were to hamper him at every step.

July 22. . . . I have spoken to many people on the subject of Greece and Turkey and find that generally most people agree with my views, but really the average man has so much to make him feel gloomy that he tries to throw off from himself matters in which he is not intimately concerned, and that, I think, is one of the reasons of the callousness which exists or which at any rate is on the surface.

The Naval Disarmament Conference was then taking place at Washington.

People are talking much nonsense of all sorts about the American Disarmament Conference. . . . But if it really does lead to any diminishment of expenses it will be something. I understand that the F.O. are much against the Japanese Treaty being renewed, though it is difficult to find out their reasons, if they have any!

. . . I feel pretty sure from what I hear in many directions that the armament question is all governed by bluff. So far as we are concerned the financial situation is such that the Navy *must* be cut down much more radically still and that the Government seize the Harding proposition with both hands, as a possible means of saving their faces.

Writing on July 22nd from Ramsgate, where he was yachting, he said:

Before I left London last week I heard much about the American situation from an intelligent man who apparently knew what he was talking about. According to him the financial situation in the U.S. is even more dicky than here. They are obliged to cut down and the Navy is what they have chosen to curtail, hoping that by their disarmament proposals they may do so with some sort of grace! If Harding cannot show a very much more satisfactory balance by next September year, the elections which are then held will assuredly go Democratic and the last term of his office will be held with the majority against him. My informant also tells me that the anti-Japanese feeling is entirely manufactured by a small but very powerful financial group, who will go any length towards attaining their end, that is to say, towards shutting Japan out from China. He says that the majority of the sound financial world in New York is against this policy and wishes to give Japan her hand in China.

Amongst other things he told me that my action at Brussels in 1919 and my minutes on the subject had in his opinion saved the situation at the time and had done much towards averting financial disaster at that date. . . .

A few days later when staying at Wrotham with Lord and Lady Strafford he was to meet Colonel House again.

Colonel House came to tea—motored from London. He fell into my arms and said it reminded him of Paris. I replied that I was sorry that my presence should be reminiscent of anything so disagreeable. I tried to talk to him about the Washington Conference, but what with his evident disinclination to talk, combined with the fact that all the women were trying to get at him, I didn't get much out of him.

The House of Lords is as dull as the remainder of London (he had found); people seem to be crushed by Ireland, by finance, and by difficulties all round.

The whole atmosphere appeared so depressing that he was delighted to get away and join his family in some pleasant country-house visits in France and later on a trip to Venice.

The Cannes Conference took place in January 1922. His experience of conferences, and he had taken part in many, had led him to share Canning's opinion that they were either useless or dangerous; useless if the Powers were in accord, dangerous if they were not.

This was the first he had ever viewed from a distance as a detached spectator, and he was not edified. Brought to an abrupt conclusion after many and varied incidents by the famous golf match which, though captain of the Golf Club, he had carefully abstained from being present at, its results had been negative.

Far different had been the Washington Conference, where the results had been positive indeed: the renunciation by Great Britain of her Naval Supremacy and the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, both of which he deeply deplored, while what had touched him personally even more had been the treatment meted out to France and to her chief naval delegate, his old friend Admiral de Bon,

whose loyal and whole-hearted collaboration had done so much to render the naval peace negotiations a success—a treatment he considered both unfair and ungrateful.

This more than aught else roused him to put forth his opinion of the Washington Conference in an article which appeared in the "Nineteenth Century and After," here summarized.*

For Great Britain voluntarily to resign that naval supremacy which to obtain and maintain she has fought and striven for more than three hundred years and the principle of which has ever been the first and foremost article of her political faith was, he believed, an act of renunciation unparalleled in history.

Quite apart from those feelings with which all Englishmen, and more especially naval officers, must view this abdication it was impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that British policy would henceforth be deprived of its strongest driving power and that the voice of Great Britain in the councils of the nations would lose much of its authority and with it much of its prestige.

A tradition on which generations of Britons had been brought up, for the defence of which millions of brave men had laid down their lives, had been shattered; truly a paradoxical result of the greatest victory ever won—won, as always must be the case with England, through her Navy.

There were other features of the naval agreement which could not be omitted.

The British proposal for the abolition of the submarine was doomed to failure from the first. That the British public accustomed for four long years to the horrors of submarine warfare, that the British Admiralty realizing how close to defeat it had brought us, should ardently desire its outlawry was no matter of surprise, but it was difficult to imagine the reasons which led our Government to believe

* By kind permission of the Editor.

that other nations would agree to proposals so disadvantageous to them and so advantageous to us; all the more as immediately after the Armistice when the Allies were still in the first flush of victory and imbued with that idealism that produced the League of Nations the attempt to bring about the abolition of the submarine had met with no response.

Mr. Balfour had laid down that the submarine, as a weapon of defence against its legitimate target, the warship, had proved of negligible value; that as one of defence it was useless, and that it was only as a commerce destroyer it had proved successful, a statement which must have sounded strange in the ears of Admirals de Bon and Sims, the close collaborators of the British Admiralty in the anti-submarine campaign, for ill-informed as the public was naval officers at all events knew that such conclusions were in direct contradiction to all experience.

As the deeds of our own submarines in the Baltic and in the Dardanelles had proved, as a weapon of offence the submarine is a useful adjunct to the main fleet, as one of defence it plays an important role, but as a commerce destroyer if legitimately used it is practically useless.

He deeply regretted the divergencies which had arisen between France and ourselves on this subject, while their maladroit handling, and the undignified public wrangle backed up by arguments full of obvious misquotations, seemed to him a sorry return for that whole-hearted co-operation and splendid spirit of comradeship afforded to the British Admiralty at the Peace Conference by the French Naval Staff, and by none more so than by Admiral de Bon himself. France's unwillingness to accept the Washington proposals he knew to be the direct result of the failure of Great Britain and the U.S. to fulfil their promises of guarantee.

The check to Japan's rising naval power was, after the surrender of Britain's naval supremacy, the most striking feature of the conference.

Increasing population, with its consequent necessity for expansion, is nearly always one of the chief causes of increasing armaments, and the case of Japan is no exception to the rule. Her overflowing population cut off from Australia and the U.S. has found an outlet on the Asiatic mainland, and as her overseas interests increase, so automatically does the necessity for protecting them. Should events prove that her limited navy is insufficient for the purpose for which it was created, there will arise in Japan a spirit of bitterness which may prove a serious peril to the future of the Four Power Pact.

For if restoration of law and order in China can only be achieved by outside intervention, Japan is the country to which by racial propinquity and geographical position the task would seem naturally to fall. Her policy has for years been shaped to this end, but financial interests, the open door, bar the way to her being permitted to deal with the matter single-handed. Her wish to do so does not necessarily indicate an aggressive or militarist attitude, for there is no greater fallacy than the belief that national policies are shaped by political regime.

Every country has a fundamental policy of its own, the outcome of geographical position and economic necessities, which never varies in the course of centuries, whatever the form of government may be, though sometimes it may suffer temporary eclipse. Thus Russia, a huge land-locked empire without any natural outlet, must, whether bolshevik or imperial, ever strive for an access to the sea, be it Constantinople or the Persian Gulf, India or the northern shores of China.

To Germany, without natural frontiers and therefore always open to invasion from East and West, a strong army

is a primary condition of national existence, and her so-called militarism is not due, as is so often advanced, to the Hohenzollerns, but rather are the Hohenzollerns the product of her military needs. France's policy must ever be dominated by the security of her Eastern frontier, which has been alternately advancing and receding since time immemorial, and this is the reason that her policy to-day differs in no essentials from that of Louis XIV and the Palatinate, or of Napoleon and the Confederation of the Rhine; it always has been and always must be the same. The ruling factor of the policy of England, an over-populated island the centre of a far-flung empire, is the command of the sea. Though temporarily obscured by financial considerations, this must again be recognized as the essential condition of the existence of the Empire, whose downfall would surely follow the abandonment of this paramount principle. Though the United States have not that long history to look back upon that other countries have, and though their conditions differ in almost every respect from theirs, they, too, have a fundamental policy which is incorporated in the Monroe Doctrine, enjoined upon them by that unique position in the world which their almost unlimited resources and independence give them. It was the ignoring of this doctrine by President Wilson which led to the tragedy of the Peace of Versailles. His passionate entreaties to his fellow-countrymen to adopt his theories were bound to fail because they were in direct contradiction to the Monroe Doctrine, which, like all fundamental policies, is so ingrained in the minds of the people as to cause them, almost subconsciously, to follow its dictates. For this reason the Monroe Doctrine must ever prove an insurmountable obstacle to the United States entering into any formal alliance, or to their taking that part in world politics which has been so ardently pressed upon them since their entry into the war.

It is therefore to be hoped that it is not a vain lure of an

eventual Anglo-American Alliance which has caused us to discard our treaty with Japan for the Four Power Pact.

The Anglo-Japanese Treaty like most things human had both its good and its bad sides, and it is the irony of the present situation that, having suffered all its disadvantages, we should now at the time of its abrogation be reaping its advantages.

Concluded in 1902, its immediate object on our side was to lighten our naval burdens in the Far East by withdrawing the greater part of our Fleet. Its consequences, however, were to enable Japan to attack and defeat Russia, thereby so weakening the latter as to seriously upset the balance of power in Europe until then fairly equally maintained between the Double and the Triple Alliances. By the inevitable sequence of events this equilibrium could only be readjusted by the adhesion of Great Britain to the Franco-Russian Alliance thus changing her position of that of arbiter to that of partisan, and from the moment the Treaty was signed Great Britain's isolation could no longer be reckoned as one of the most powerful factors towards the maintenance of the peace of Europe. So much for the disadvantages of the Treaty, and now for its advantages. The steadying effect her alliance with one of the Great Powers had on Japan is incalculable; without her obligations to Great Britain, she would undoubtedly have gone much farther in China than she has done. Her Government loyally came to our assistance in the war, a step not necessarily consistent with her national interests nor in accordance with popular desire; it has ever discouraged anti-British propaganda in India, and when we consider how dangerous already is the state of that country we must realize how desperate it might have been had the Japanese Government not chosen to exercise a restraining influence.

Japan also has reaped substantial benefits from the Treaty. By its means her credit was greatly enhanced and

she was given a status amongst the Great Powers and a voice in their councils which even her increasing wealth and power could not alone have gained for her. Thus the Treaty has conferred great advantages on both Great Britain and Japan. Will the somewhat shadowy provision of the Four Power Pact prove of equal service to the contracting parties? Whatever its advantages may be to others, to England at any rate it can never give that substantial guarantee which did her alliance with Japan.

And if Japan should not be content with the new conditions, the Four Power Pact will, it is to be feared, be but of little assistance in solving the problem of the Pacific.

Much has been heard of the bogey of the Yellow Peril, but is it not likely that all that has been written and said about the union of the Anglo-Saxon races and the solidarity of the English-speaking peoples may raise the bogey of a white peril in Asia, a fear of the desire to exploit Asia for the benefit of the white races?

The war has stirred up national and racial feeling to such a pitch everywhere as to make not unlikely the raising of the cry of "Asia for the Asiatics!" and if that should happen, it would be to Japan that the nations of the East would naturally turn in their search for a leader, as did the German states to Prussia before 1870. Those smaller German states had no love for their big neighbour, nor have other Asiatic nations for Japan, but they recognize in her, as did the German states in Prussia, the only possible power that could lead them to their goal. The Four Power Pact would be valueless in such an eventuality.

The Conference has proved an unqualified success for the United States, who have achieved all the objects they had in view. They have furthered the ends of peace to an extent and in a manner which would have been thought impossible a short time ago. Their power has been increased and their influence widened, their authority extended and

their prestige raised, but it must not be forgotten that they never would have obtained so triumphant an issue without the whole-hearted co-operation of Great Britain, who has sacrificed much in her unselfish desire to further the cause of peace to such an extent, indeed, as to raise the doubt whether her sacrifices have not been too great.

Time alone will show.

CHAPTER XVI

RETIREMENT

INACTIVITY was beginning to weigh heavily upon him.

The truth is (as he wrote to his wife in July 1922) that I really want something to do. Something which I *must* give my mind and occupation to, but it is awfully difficult to find.

His health was restored, he was only fifty-eight, he felt he still might be of use to his country.

When he had left the Admiralty he had been convinced that sooner or later some suitable appointment would be offered him—a governorship, an embassy—which he deemed the part he had played during the war entitled him to. But year after year passed, and he began slowly to understand that he would never be employed again.

Independent in his views, outspoken in his opinions, he had not realized the hostility he had roused among those in whose hands all power lay and from whom he differed so entirely as regarded ideas, principles, traditions. He belonged to another world, another age, an age of chivalry, of generosity, of that courage and courtesy of which Isaac Barrow says:

that true courage doth prompt boldly to undertake and resolutely despatch great enterprises and employments of difficulty

and

for courtesy, how otherwise can it be well displayed than in sedulous activities for the good of men.

He was above all a great gentleman, that

*high type of cultivated English nature in the present and the last century . . . than which, with all its faults and defects, our Western civilization has produced few things more admirable.

* Dean Inge, "England."

But for such there is but little place in hustling modern democracy.

And yet what great services might he not have rendered at a time when England and France, whose alliance had been sealed on a hundred battle-fields, were slowly drifting apart. His sympathy with and knowledge of France, where he had lived for so many years, the friendships he had formed there, the halo with which his war services still surrounded him, fitted him as none other to tighten those bonds the cleavage of which could only add one element of instability the more to an already unstable world.

Firmly convinced that the peace of the world and the prosperity of Europe depended in a large measure on the maintenance of cordial relations between England and France, he feared that should these continue to be subjected to strains of which the late Conference at Lausanne had afforded a lamentable example, the bonds of friendship between the two countries on which such vital issues depended must be necessarily weakened.

Although inevitably occasions must arise when the world-wide interests of these two great Powers would be found in conflict he thought that their main interests in no way clashed, for the policy of France, an agricultural country in a large measure self-supporting, was directed towards the security of her frontiers; that of England, an over-populated industrial island incapable of producing enough food for her teeming millions, towards the maintenance of her trade. In these different policies no conflicting issues are to be found, and from this absence of any of the usual causes of war should be evolved a mutual allied policy whose strength and moderation would be a guarantee of general peace.

But as he wrote:

*Differences can only be satisfactorily composed by a determination on either side to pay due regard to national

* Memorandum on Franco-British relations.

susceptibilities by a mutual conviction of good faith and a knowledge of each other's psychology.

Unfortunately it is precisely a lack of this knowledge that characterizes the majority of both Englishmen and Frenchmen. The Frenchman arrives at conclusions by logic; the Englishman by instinct, sentiment, and even sentimentality, a distinction of methods in itself sufficiently great to create difficulties in negotiating. The Englishman in his inborn sense of safety, the outcome of centuries of immunity from invasion, finds some difficulty in understanding and appreciating the anxieties of a Frenchman, who, in the space of a hundred years, has no less than three times seen his territory in the occupation of an enemy. On the other hand, the Frenchman with no experience of the miseries entailed by the impossibility of finding work cannot easily conceive the deplorable state of affairs arising from the compulsory unemployment of more than a million breadwinners. Each nation in fact has its own peculiar problems difficult of solution which are but imperfectly understood by the other. A mutual comprehension of them would go far towards eliminating existing misunderstandings that tend to impair the cordiality of their relations. On many an occasion during the war agreements involving mutual concessions on matters of vital importance were arrived at by men whose knowledge and sympathy with each other's difficulties alone made accord possible. But it is difficult to believe that, given the same conditions, success should not attend similar efforts now when the need for unity is just as great if less apparent.

The Treaty of Versailles has left us a heavy heritage. Its many imperfections are universally recognized, but though other nations with less at stake may regard the possibility of its revision with complacency or even approval, France, who sees in it the only charter of her present frontiers, regards any such suggestion with the utmost distrust. Her attitude will meet with a ready sympathy from those who realize that there is more than one side to the burning question of security.

Peace is the great desideratum, but where so many conflicting interests are concerned, it can only be assured

by their elimination or by a combination of Powers morally and physically strong enough to enforce it. If the former is possible, it is only in a future so remote as to be beyond the pale of present politics. The latter is possible, and in it lies the only hope of European salvation.

England and France each have political traditions which ought to engender an enlightened liberalism as far removed from autocracy on the one hand as from communism on the other. Liberty without licence and authority without despotism should serve as a motto for both, and on this community of sentiment might well be laid the foundations of a United States of Europe in which should be found the true hope of universal peace.

The entry of the French into the Ruhr had caused much wild talk in England, but as he wrote (August 22nd 1922):

The [Ruhr] situation is the natural result of the original sin of compromise at Versailles and now it seems to me that people will just have to await events.

He never failed staunchly to uphold his views wherever he found himself.

July 17, 1923. . . . Yesterday I assisted at a very pleasant and interesting feast where my hosts were Mervyn Herbert and his wife and my co-guests Lord Grey, de Bunsen, Aubrey Herbert, Fisher the ex-minister, old Mrs. Page, who, rather to my astonishment, showed extraordinary signs of enthusiasm at meeting me again! I had no idea we had been such friends. Grey was quite interesting about France and quite clear. He said much that we say, but also said, greatly to my astonishment, that although he had said all he could in their favour, they never helped by putting forward their story so as England could understand it. I of course could not contradict him, but I told him that my impression was they had done so over and over again. But he said no—all Poincaré's speeches had been lacking in pointing out these matters which commanded the sympathy of Englishmen. He said since the League of Nations existed the only way to salvation was through that agency, because if France would only consent to Germany being asked to join,

the only terms on which she (Germany) could join would in themselves guarantee more thoroughly than any treaty the impossibility of France being again attacked without the Allies coming to her assistance. Grey and Fisher both thought that the great preponderance of Public Opinion in England was anti-French. Aubrey and I both dissented, and I added that if it was it was largely the fault of our Government, who only followed and refused to lead.

He was quite as eager to expound the English point of view in France, where, even when political tension between the two countries was at its worst, his personal relations continued to be of the best.

Invited to the unveiling on November 11th 1922 of a monument commemorating the signing of the Armistice at Rethondes, he had been agreeably surprised at learning that on this occasion the *Médaille Militaire* would be conferred on him. This decoration, of all military honours the most prized, as being bestowed exclusively either on privates or victorious commanders-in-chief, and as a rule the only one worn by the great war leaders, had never before been given to a British admiral, which rendered it doubly gratifying. For this ceremony he and his wife were the guests of the Marquis and Marquise de l'Aigle at Le Franc-Port in close vicinity to Rethondes, and as he wended his way through vast crowds, delegations from every country, he hardly recognized the lonely glade which he remembered with nothing but the two trains and a few sentries. But when, after the unveiling of the monument, the bestowal of the medal on him by President Millerand and an eloquent speech by Marshal Foch, Poincaré, while the gathering darkness of the November evening blotted out aught but the forest, began to recall the arrival of the German plenipotentiaries and all the subsequent moving events, he was back to those unforgettable days culminating in that triumphant dawn which had appeared to herald a new era of

peace, of happiness, of prosperity. How high had been the hopes, how bitter the disillusion!

His own country too, Scotland, had not been backward in honouring him. That spring he, together with Marshal Haig and other military leaders, had received the freedom of St. Andrews and the honorary degree of that university.

He was in great request for unveiling war memorials, and in 1925 was called upon to do so at Kirkcaldy, where on June 27th, in presence of a vast concourse of people computed at from 25 to 30,000, he unveiled the memorial to those

whose memory they cherished with feelings of pride and gratitude—pride at their gallantry, pride at the manner in which they had laid down their lives, and gratitude for the sacrifice they had made—for they died defending their country, they died that the Empire might survive and that we might live. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for another.

Scotland, and above all Fife, with all its associations, was what he clung to. The death of his sister, Mrs. Paget, in the summer of 1923 had been a deep sorrow to him, and when in the following year he and his family spent the autumn at Wemyss it had been a great consolation to sit for hours with Pimmy, now a bedridden nonagenarian, talking over old times, to wander about the place reminiscent of his happy childhood, lingering in Chapel Gardens, where rested those who had gone before, and visiting all his old friends in the village.

His life was now divided between Wemyss and Cannes, while part of the summer months was usually spent either in London or Paris, equally at home in both capitals. He happened to be in London during the general strike of 1926.

May 4. . . . The first day of the strike has passed off quite quietly and without incident. I attended a debate in the House of Lords this afternoon which did not produce

any further knowledge of events. . . . It is a challenge on the part of the Trades Unions held at the head of the Government, and the Government's attitude is that they will go no further until the General Strike is called off. That the Government won't win is inconceivable, but at what cost? . . .

Everybody seems quite good-tempered. Streets an odd sight. No 'buses but a large increase of private motor-cars and many taxis. . . .

As to the debate in the House of Lords, what struck me was that, though there were some admirable sentiment and a dignified sense of meeting a public danger without panic, there was a total lack of leadership amongst those so-called statesmen who alone could lead with success.

May 10. . . . Yesterday I went to church at the Chapel Royal and heard a really excellent sermon from Alington, the Head Master of Eton. The Church generally shows up so badly during crises that it was a pleasure to hear a temperate, sensible, fair, and common-sense pronouncement from the pulpit. . . . Of serious rioting there appears to have been but little—such as has taken place has been promptly put down. . . . A large convoy of flour was unloaded at the London Docks on Saturday under military protection, and the troops were heartily cheered by the crowd, who must mostly have been strikers! . . . I have no news from Wemyss and I conclude there has been no trouble there. . . . I feel rather ridiculous, for here I am quite unable to see what I can do, yet most unwilling to leave, for on such occasions when anything may happen (though day by day increasingly unlikely) I feel I should not be away.

Two days later the strike came to an abrupt end and he was able to join his family in Paris, where they had taken a flat for the season.

The atmosphere of Paris had ever been congenial to him: dim ancestral memories, mayhap, of bygone days when Scots and French fought side by side, and France was nearer to Scotland than England. The two years he had been buried in the Admiralty had caused him quite to give

up going out into London society, but in Paris he took his full share of all social pleasures. He had innumerable naval, military, literary, and political friends, and was welcomed by all. Admiral de Bon, his ally and collaborator during the war and peace negotiations, was no longer: he had passed away in 1923, much to Wester Wemyss' grief; but with Marshal Foch his intimacy continued unabated as well as with Admiral Lacaze, while with the latter their mutual friendship with M. Hanotaux, statesman and historian, formed another link.

When he had returned to Cannes after the war he had made the acquaintance of the Duc de la Force, the historian and future academician, and the Duchesse de la Force—an acquaintance which speedily ripened into firm friendship; their house both in Paris and at Cannes formed a delightful social and intellectual centre which he much appreciated, and it was greatly owing to these influences that he set to work to write. "The Navy in the Dardanelles," an account of the Gallipoli campaign, was the result. He had intended following this up by another volume on the Egyptian campaign, but "The Navy in the Dardanelles" not meeting with much success from a public satiated at that time by war literature he was discouraged, and desisted.

Ever a diligent student of history, he now devoted himself to instituting comparisons between the events of the past and those in which he himself had borne a share. The contrast between the supreme Sea Power of England which at the commencement of last century had alone defeated Napoleon's might with the far less important part played during the late war by the British Navy, though equal in every respect to that of Napoleonic times, had deeply impressed him, and he had no hesitation in attributing this to the hampering effects of the Declaration of Paris of 1856, an opinion entertained as far back as 1871 by the late Lord Salisbury, who in a speech in the House of Lords

(March 6th, 1871) had said that, "since the Declaration of Paris, the Fleet, valuable as it was for preventing an invasion of these shores, was almost valueless for any other purpose."

On November 10th 1927 the failure of the Naval Conference of Geneva gave rise to a debate in the House of Lords. Wester Wemyss took this occasion to give forcible and striking expression to his views.

Every country (he said) is naturally rightly concerned primarily with its own security and must judge for itself the minimum of defensive forces that is required.

To England armaments necessarily mean naval armaments since all our interests . . . are bound up with the sea.

In late years this elementary truth had been largely overlooked owing to the preponderatingly military character of the late war. The fact that we had been compelled to concentrate on a military effort on land was due to the Declaration of Paris of 1856. By this fatal declaration we had abandoned the immemorial right of a belligerent to suppress entirely upon the sea *all* the resources upon which the enemy depended. From that date (1856) our power was limited, so far as neutral ships were concerned, to the suppression of goods adjudged to be contraband of war. Blockade, before the Declaration of Paris, was a swift, sure, and comparatively humane method of forcing the enemy to surrender.

In time of war, he said, the function of the Fleet can be summed up in one short sentence—it is to obtain and retain command of the seas. But the only efficacious way of doing this is the destruction of the enemy's main sea forces. To destroy them, however, they have to be found, and found, moreover, upon the high seas, where alone they can be brought adequately to action.

But the possibility of this is entirely bound up with our ability and power to interfere with his trade. If therefore

it has been settled that in time of war our enemy's supplies shall go freely forward to him, it is very evident that any chance we might have of meeting and destroying his Fleet at sea will have almost vanished, for there is no imperious necessity for his Fleets to leave the shelter of their ports at all; and so it turned out during the Great War, when, because and only because the enemy's supplies and resources reached him in vast quantities the German High Sea Fleet never did leave its ports except for the purpose of evading our forces, carrying out some raid which could hardly have any effect on the wider issues of the war and returning to their bases before our Fleet had time to intercept them, there to remain as a Fleet in being and as such a perpetual menace to our command of the seas.

The Declaration of Paris had rendered our Fleet almost incapable of offensive action; and he urged that we should not acquiesce in the present state of affairs. With a skilful use of examples from the late war he combated the argument of those who believed that a truly effective blockade would convert neutral nations into enemies. The Declaration of Paris had not the force of a binding treaty, and there was no reason, moral or legal, why any of its signatories should not at any time withdraw from it. If this course were pursued, our Fleet could be used with full effect in a future war, and England thereby relieved from the danger of any other prolonged military struggle. The British Fleet, in the hands of such people as we were, was one of the best assurances against war which could have been devised.

War is a horrible thing (he concluded by saying), it is brutal, cruel, destructive and demoralizing; but, bad as it is, there are things that are worse, and one of those things is a national habit of regarding it as an evil so great that it must and shall be avoided at all costs and at every sacrifice. For, human nature being what it is, there are

things for which nations must and will fight or else lose their nationality and integrity, their freedom and their honour; and any nation which, by word or deed, shows itself either unwilling or unable to fight is by the impression of feebleness it produces on others doing, I verily believe, just as much to engender war as do these vast armaments which we all desire to suppress. We are all striving for peace and disarmament, but I verily believe that by a firm attitude on our part we shall arrive not at peace through disarmament but, I hope and trust, at disarmament through peace.

This speech, listened to with rapt attention by the House, greatly embarrassed the Government, whose only reply was to the effect that withdrawal from the Declaration of Paris would be impossible, while intimating that as in future wars Great Britain would probably remain neutral such a course might prove disadvantageous.

In the spring of 1928 the post of President of the Institution of Naval Architects was offered to and accepted by him, in succession to the Duke of Northumberland, whose term of office had come to an end. The friendships he formed with many of its members, more especially with Mr. Dana the secretary; the interest and pleasure he derived from their meetings proved a great satisfaction to him in the coming years, while he hailed the opportunities thus offered to call attention otherwise than in the House of Lords to the dangers threatened as much to the shipbuilding industry as to the safety of the country in general, by the extreme reductions in naval estimates.

He entered upon his new duties in March.

March 29. Yesterday I spent the whole morning at the Naval Architects', where I was very well received, and I am told my opening speech went down very well. . . .

His time was again fully occupied. For many years Director of the Wemyss Coal Co., he now became director

of various other companies, including Cables and Wireless. But a city life held as little attraction for him as had office work. He felt confined, restricted, both mentally and physically, and longed for the great spaces, the far-off horizons of his naval past, while seized by an irresistible desire once more to roam the world.

There now appeared an opening which seemed to fulfil all his aspirations.

He had long been convinced—a conviction much strengthened by the war—that the Navy should be in a position to draw on purely British sources for the oil supply on which they were so dependent. An option on the oil-fields of Mesopotamia had been given to the Turkish Petroleum Co., composed of four nationalities, English, Dutch, French, and American; but this option expired in 1928, when their choice of plots would have to have been made and the remaining oil-fields thrown open to competition.

A scheme was being set afoot to form a company called the British Oil Development Co., purely British in nature, whose activities would be as profitable to the Empire as to Irak, and in no ways conflict with the legitimate interests of the already established T.P.C. while co-operating in the complete development of Mesopotamia; strong financial support, it was intimated, would be forthcoming and the undertaking appeared full of promise.

The first aim now was to obtain the necessary concessions for which no one seemed better qualified than Wester-Wemyss, the part he had taken in the Revolt on the Desert having earned him the gratitude of the Arab populations as well as the friendship of King Feisal, whom he often saw when the latter visited London.

Nov. 5, 1927. Quite a pleasant lunch with Feisal, who assured me that the three people in the world for whom he had the greatest regard were his father, myself, and

Allenby! He looked a very great gentleman in his European clothes. . . . Jaffar was there, and it was amusing seeing him, since the last time we met he was my prisoner!* . . . I told him (King Feisal) how pleased I was to see him an actual monarch, and he replied that I had had no small share in helping him to his throne—rather an Oriental exaggeration, I am afraid. But, anyhow, quite pleasant.

The King having warmly invited him to Bagdad, he started on May 10th for Mesopotamia.

That day he had been installed in Westminster Abbey as Grand Cross of the Bath. The medieval pomp and magnificence of the ceremony had much impressed him, and all the more as it formed so sharp a contrast to his journey by air a few hours later. "A day of incident," he noted in his diary. "Bath ceremony and first flight." He had never flown before.

Once more in his element, he was happy to find himself on board ship again, even though that ship is not a man-of-war. . . . We have just passed through the Straits of Bonifacio. How often have I been through these Straits! Almost every wave of the Mediterranean seems to be an old acquaintance.

May 13. A real beautiful Mediterranean day. We passed Stromboli, which was in eruption, and through the Straits of Messina in daylight, and my mind went back to old *Suffolk* days. Do you remember our stay at Palermo and Taormina, and Naples and Sorrento? A perfectly delightful recollection.

And, arrived in Cairo,

how familiar was the journey in the train this morning, especially the first part as far as Quatia; every speck of sand seemed to be known to me! Cairo too—but what changes in the last eleven years! Large and broad boulevards run from the city to this place (Heliopolis), which used to be a perfectly detached suburb—signs of wealth and prosperity on all sides.

* In Egypt in 1916.

He was accompanied by M. de Loys, the oil expert of the B.O.D. Co., nephew of an old friend, who proved an agreeable travelling companion.

Bagdad, May 18. Here I am in Bagdad, the city of the Khalifs, the centre of the Arab world. I got here one week after leaving London! It is very wonderful and seems to make the fable of the flying carpet almost a prophecy. Leaving Heliopolis at 6 a.m. yesterday (Wednesday 17th and it seems to me like a week ago), we flew over Ismailia, the Canal, and the Sinai Desert, to Gaza, where we arrived at 9.30 a.m., and there, right in the middle of the desert, we found a most excellent breakfast awaiting us. The organization of the Imperial Airways is truly excellent. The station was a marvel of cleanliness and tidiness, evidently conducted with military discipline, all their personnel so well turned out—so clean and smart. I rather expected to see them clothed in any sort of apparel, or perhaps none at all. But on the contrary they all looked as if they were going to walk down the Champs-Élysées. After three-quarters of an hour there, we started off for our second stage, which took us right over the northern part of the Dead Sea, which we crossed at a height of 7,000 feet, and had a clear view of Jerusalem and Nazareth. At that height, as you can imagine, one cannot well make out details. Then on we went over the most appallingly hard, inhospitable-looking country that can be imagined for another 380 miles. This part of the journey was not so pleasant, for it proved very bumpy. I didn't feel sea-sick, but it gave me an unpleasant odd sort of feeling at the back of my head. Then after more than four hours we landed on a barren plain at a place called Rutbah, where there is a solitary mud fort—the outpost of Irak. It is a sort of junction for the old camel-tracks and modern motor-route between Bagdad, Mosul, and Damascus. In the fort itself, which has a garrison of a few men, is a rest-house and a restaurant, also an oil depot of the Imperial Airway Co., and once more I was astonished at the smartness of all these men living alone in the desert literally hundreds of miles not from civilization but from any other human being, and moreover in an atmosphere of heat which would have justified any slackness.

Half an hour to fill up with petrol, eat a sandwich, and have a drink, and we were off on our final stage, which took us right up to Bagdad. This part of the journey was much pleasanter, for there was no bumping. The country became rather less barren looking, the rocky hills gave way to sandy plains, and then we caught sight of a huge lake (salt) which made a gorgeous patch of bright blue in the yellow surroundings. Just beyond the lake the Euphrates with green banks, and then the Tigris.

The approach to Bagdad was really beautiful from the height at which we then were. The two rivers, not so far from each other, with their fringes of green, and the vast town with its minarets set down in the yellow country formed a very striking panorama. For the edification of us passengers our pilot approached by the river, which is more tortuous and winding than anything that you can well imagine, and we finally made a most beautiful landing at the aerodrome, and I stepped out of the machine to be greeted by Col. Stanley (representative of the B.O.D.) and the King's A.D.C., who had been sent to welcome me. It was a 10 hours' flight which I wouldn't have missed for the world, but one which I am not particularly anxious to repeat. The A.D.C. who met me brought the most cordial greetings from the King and informed me that the latter had engaged a suite of apartments for me at the hotel, because owing to alterations going on in the Palace he was unable to give us both a bedroom and a sitting-room. . . . The A.D.C. is at my disposal whenever I want anything, and a motor of the King is to do what I want with all day and all the time I am here.

After a delightful refreshing sleep in this lovely dry air, undisturbed by mosquitoes or any other noxious animals, I awoke this morning feeling fresh and fit, and at 9 o'clock went off (attended by the A.D.C.) to pay my first visit to Feisal. I was really touched by the warmth and cordiality of his greeting. He was genuinely pleased to see me. Some little time was spent in his welcoming me and my thanking him for all his courtesy and kindness, and then he got to business by telling me how welcome has been my letter to him and how pleased he was at the proposals we had made. He explained the political difficulties that stood in the way—

none of which were new to me—and pointed out the manner in which they might in his opinion be overcome. I was perfectly *au courant* with all this, for Stanley had posted me up in them all, and he (Feisal) gave me his assurance he would do all that lay in his power to help—an assurance which I know is genuine since our interests follow lines identical to his. . . .

After seeing Feisal I went to see the High Commissioner (Sir P. Dobbs) with Stanley and de Loys; after a conversation of more than an hour and a half came away very well satisfied. For Dobbs is the regular type of the very exact, careful, and somewhat shy official—very straight, but careful not to commit himself. It took me nearly an hour's hard work to make him thaw sufficiently for him to give us a perfectly clear exposé of the situation, and of the possible difficulties that we may encounter. But I am now assured, as I have always felt to be the case, that we have the means of overcoming them. As soon as I can ascertain for certain and prove to be correct the assurance that I have received, I shall hurry home to take up the negotiation in London. . . . I have much writing to do and not much time to do it in, as I am going to witness the opening of Parliament to-morrow morning. . . . It's all very amusing (the negotiations, I mean) and extremely interesting, and I don't see why I should not succeed. . . .

A week at Bagdad with further "extremely satisfactory interviews" with King Feisal left him the conviction that such would be the case, and it was in a very contented frame of mind he started forth on his return journey, having enjoyed every moment of his stay. He had visited mosques, ruins, been present at the opening of Parliament—"Feisal looked splendid"—received hospitality from native sheiks. On his way back he motored through the desert to Damascus, and after two days' sightseeing reached Port Said by motor and train, from where he embarked for Marseilles.

The negotiations in Irak had been a success—those in London appeared to present insuperable difficulties—the T.P.C. (Turkish Petroleum Co.), now become the I.P.C.

(Irak Petroleum Co.), evinced no desire to work with the B.O.D., nor did the Government or Colonial Office show much sympathy with them or their aims, while the financial support which had seemed assured was not forthcoming. And yet, in spite of all obstacles, hindrances, opposition, he gallantly struggled on, determined not to be beaten.

The beginning of December saw him once again on his way to Bagdad. Embarked at Marseilles on a P. & O. steamer, found himself on board with Sir J. Challoner, the newly appointed High Commissioner for Palestine, and, arrived at Port Said, accompanied him on the *Aigrette*, the Suez Canal Co.'s yacht he knew so well, to Ismailia, where he was warmly welcomed by all the Canal officials.

This trip turned out far less pleasant than his former one—the weather was cold and rainy, the desert a sea of mud. Much to his disgust he was kept over forty-eight hours in Damascus in consequence of heavy rains having rendered the roads impracticable for motors. However,

my stay here is not inopportune for the Damascus Chamber of Commerce has "waited on me" to inform me that they will give all assistance if "my Company" will make the terminal of the pipe-line in a Syrian port—and I have moreover received a telegram from the Beyrout Chamber of Commerce to the same effect. It seems the B.O.D. is only known in those parts as "Lord Wemyss' Company."

He spent but a few days at Bagdad hurrying over his business so as to be back at Cannes in time for his Silver Wedding on December 21st. He flew to Cairo, embarked at Port Said, and reached Cannes on the very morning.

He had been greatly concerned during his journey by the news of King George's illness, but it was only on his return to England that he realized how very serious that illness had been. "The King really does seem better, thank God," he wrote to his wife on January 7th.

And now he was to learn that Marshal Foch was very ill.

Ever since the days of the Armistice their friendship had been a very close one. By a strange coincidence, just a year previously, in January 1928, it had been Marshal Foch coming over to Monbrillant from Nice, where he had unveiled the war memorial, who had brought him tidings of Haig's sudden death. The Marshal was yet to linger on two months longer, and he was to see him once more before he passed away in March.

He went over to represent the British Navy at his funeral.

March 26. I have just returned from a most exhausting ceremony. The organization for the entry into Notre Dame and the service there was practically non-existent. I was first of all stopped in my passage up the aisle (being well up to time) by a procession of the clergy coming down it. Then having arrived at a barrier I was told that I couldn't go any farther, because there was no more room. Luckily my personality was known, for I heard someone say "*Mais c'est l'Amiral,*" when all obstacles faded and I was eventually shown to my place. The service in the church I thought disappointing. . . .

Finally we found ourselves in the street outside Notre Dame being marshalled into our places. But once outside the church the whole atmosphere changed. First of all, the weather was almost perfect. No wind, no rain—but a dull, sorrowing day which admirably suited the vast crowds that lined the streets and which behaved in a most admirable manner—every head bare and *absolute* silence. The street lamps were all lit and draped with crape, which gave a most funereal aspect to the whole scene. As representing the Navy they gave me the place of honour over all the Field-M Marshals, and we processed from Notre Dame over the river, via Rue de Rivoli, Place de la Concorde, Champs-Élysées and by the Grand Palais to the entrance of the Invalides, where we were all ushered into two tribunes to hear Poincaré's oration. The coffin was stopped opposite the gate, between the two tribunes.

Poincaré's speech was quite all right, but it seemed to me he lost the opportunity of making something really fine of it. A somewhat banal reference to his deeds, with which the

whole crowd was well acquainted, hardly gave the tone that one hoped for, and almost expected. I did note, however, that he referred to the Marshal's Christian virtues, which I suppose was something, coming as it did from that source. The silence was most impressive—not one single sound was to be heard from the crowd that filled that enormous space, and its attitude was something really impressive and fine. The march from Notre Dame to the Invalides took more than an hour.

After the oration came the march past, all the troops saluting the coffin as they passed it. England had sent two companies and the band of the Coldstream Guards, and perfectly magnificent they looked—the admiration, and justly so, of all onlookers. Also some London Scottish, who looked very well in their kilts. A few foreign troops and masses and masses of French Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, etc., and at the end countless delegations of Legions, organizations, etc. It was too long, but they had all come of their own initiative and wanted to give a final salute to the good old Marshal. . . .

We didn't get back to the hotel till nearly four. Then I went and called at the Admiralty and received a visit from Weygand and L'Hopital. Both of them so nice and so truly sad. They were both charming and told me how often old Foch had talked of me with such sentiments of friendship.

Within less than two years he was again to represent the British Navy, this time at Marshal Joffre's funeral. One by one the great figures of the war were passing away.

The Institution of Naval Architects had become to him a source of ever-growing interest. It was a pleasure to preside over their annual spring meeting, which brought together so many prominent personalities and where so many interesting papers of import were read and discussed, while the summer meeting held in Italy in 1929 afforded the greatest enjoyment to him and to his family.

The opening of the meeting took place at the Capitol, and there ensued a whirl of entertainments—banquets,

receptions, sightseeing—while nothing could surpass the warmth of their reception nor the hospitality of their Italian hosts. Captain Bevan, his former flag-lieutenant, was now Naval Attaché in Rome, which made their stay there doubly pleasant. All the great naval establishments and shipping yards were visited in turn—Naples, Genoa, La Spezzia, besides the Fiat Works at Turin—while everywhere the same warm welcome awaited them. They ended up at Trieste, where visits to the establishment of Messrs. Cosulich and many entertainments closed a tour which left nothing but pleasant recollections.

He had enjoyed every minute of the meeting as much as he was to enjoy a journey to Brazil and the Argentine in the following summer, which he undertook on behalf of the Cables and Wireless Co., this time accompanied by his daughter. They started on August 15th.

Rio de Janeiro enchanted him.

Sept. 2. What a lovely place this is! Quite unlike any other I have ever seen, and indescribable. The Bay is so large and so full of lesser bays that one is never quite sure what one is looking upon, the ocean or not. The great hills, many of them of sugar-loaf shape, appear scattered in all directions. . . . In the afternoon we went for a long drive in the town and the environs, and it is there that I received the impressions with which I began this letter. The distances are enormous, the magnificent avenues beautifully laid out, the streets clean and well kept. . . .

Much hospitality—"everybody is extraordinarily nice and cordial and I have formed a very delightful opinion of the Brazilians—hospitable, kind, cheerful, and pleasant"—made the eleven days they spent at Rio pass rapidly.

Rio de Janeiro, Sept. 8. . . . The President of Argentine, as of course you will have seen, has gracefully retired into private life. The events there do not appear to create any excitement here.

Sept. 9. . . . To-day we have news of a counter-revolution in Argentine against what was the peaceful dethronement of the President. Nobody seems to think that it is anything very serious, and all seem to expect that matters will settle down to a normal condition in a few days. . . .

Sept. 10. . . . I hope to get my business finished to-day, and to-morrow we are off to Santos and São Paulo, at both of which we have stations. Then on to Monte Video. . . . The counter-revolution at Buenos Aires seems to have fizzled out. . . .

São Paulo, Sept. 13. We have had a most delightful day to-day. We started off at 10 a.m. to visit a coffee plantation some 120 kms. away and drove through the most gorgeous scenery. Splendid ranges of mountains fading away into the far distance—and such a distance! Luckily it was a beautifully clear day and so there was no mist to impede the magnificent views. Mountain after mountain and no sign of human habitation. We eventually arrived at our destination at about 2 o'clock. A delightful Brazilian country-house, very typical I should think. Broad verandas and loggias with paved floors and a rather rough and very bright garden, with a swimming-pool surrounded by a lovely box hedge (everything grows here) and the whole enclosed by large orange trees with pineapples growing in between them, and large beds of standard roses at intervals. Away beyond stretched the coffee plantation. It was the last day of the harvest, and the owner, to whom we had a letter of introduction, most kindly and hospitably showed us all the various stages through which the berries go before they are finally made up into sacks for export. A delightful glimpse of Brazilian country life. An old negress who had been a slave was pointed out to us, and we were told that she was a hundred years old. Another old ex-slave had died last year in her 130th year!

Buenos Aires, Sept. 25. . . . A wonderful town is Buenos Aires; much of the new part is like Paris—that is to say, the architecture and some of the lay-out. Great broad avenues with large houses abutting them; many public gardens—statues, etc. There is a park, imitative of the Bois, with a really beautiful and large rose-garden and all very spacious.

The much talked-of revolution has entirely ended, leaving in power the provisional Government, which apparently is extremely popular. Everybody, natives and foreign alike, seem to be pleased and look forward to a better state of affairs than existed before. All the members of the new Government have the name of being honest and patriotic and for the present at any rate all is well.

They had arrived at Buenos Aires at the close of a revolution; when they reached Rio on their return it was to witness the outbreak of a revolution more serious than that of the Argentine, which, while hindering the negotiations he was undertaking, also marred the pleasure they expected from seeing their many friends. Detained in Rio, they spent most of their time at the head office of the Company listening to the news of the spread of the revolution all over the country and awaiting every minute the fall of the Government, which, however, only took place a few days after their departure. After various delays they had sailed on October 16th, reaching Boulogne on the 31st. A short stay in London to make his report to the Company, a visit to Wemyss, and he returned to Cannes, "delighted," as he wrote in his diary, "to be at home again."

In the following summer the meeting of the Naval Architects took place in Paris, where the French Colonial Exhibition, Marshal Lyautey's creation, was making the world flock to Vincennes. Wester-Wemyss was not backward in his meed of praise for so remarkable a feat of organization, while the fairy-like entertainments given by the Marshal filled him with admiration, as did the different exhibits, more especially the Dutch and Italian; his one regret being that England, the foremost colonial power, should not be taking part.

The welcome extended to the Naval Architects not only by their French colleagues of the Association Technique Maritime but by the authorities and all those they came

into contact with, in no ways fell short of that they had received in Rome, nor did the boundless hospitality. Banquets, receptions, a luncheon at the Colonial Exhibition, all accompanied by many speeches, succeeded each other during the four days of the meeting, which concluded by a tour to the Chateaux of the Loire and a visit to the shipping yards of St. Nazaire, where they saw the *Normandie*, the big Atlantic steamer, being laid down.

CHAPTER XVII

LAST DAYS AND THE END

HE had presided over the meeting with all his accustomed courtesy and charm, and as M. Rousseau, the distinguished President of the Association Technique Maritime, was later to write:

Je ne peux oublier ni la rare distinction avec laquelle il présidait l'Institut des Naval Architects ni la cordialité avec laquelle il avait répondu à notre appel en venant en France afin d'y tenir ce meeting en 1931, ni enfin, l'extrême bonne grace dont il avait témoigné dans toutes nos manifestations communes.

But it had cost him an effort, for he was not feeling well.

The insidious disease, the origin of which dated back to his last years at the Admiralty, was gradually sapping his health and strength. Its symptoms had reappeared ever since 1926. The devoted care of his friend and physician Dr. Brès, the climate of Cannes, the severe regime he restricted himself to, cures at various watering-places had so far held it in abeyance, but now his health began to fail. The cure at Royat, which in the previous year had brought about marked improvement, did him no good this summer—rather the contrary—while a visit to England in September to open a Shipping Exhibition and to take part in the Faraday celebrations proved a distinct strain. He was there during the Invergordon mutiny and when the pound went off the Gold Standard.

London, Sept. 16. . . . This business in the Atlantic Fleet is *bad*. The men have a real grievance in the matter of the retention of their pay, because the present rate was guaranteed by the Government, but it is terrible to think that they should have taken the means to get it redressed they have. To-day's news is that the Fleet have been ordered to their home ports and that the grievance will be examined.

But, whatever way it goes, it is a terrible example and may quite well bring to naught the Government's plans for economy. The Admiralty's hands are rather tied because they acknowledge the grievance, and so it is not impossible that the trouble may spread. These are matters which might have been better explained by the Admiralty when issuing the orders about the pay—but really it is in the hands of the Government. At present I understand that the Government are firm, but the matter is only likely to be solved if tact and firmness are employed, and for the present I can tell you nothing more. . . . How the matter is regarded by the PEOPLE I have no chance of judging. It looks rather as if it were looked upon as a joke!!! Imagine insubordination in the Navy being regarded as a joke. It's awful. . . . The House of Lords meets to-morrow, and I shall go there to hear anything there is to be learnt. X dines here every night, and I get the latest news from him. To-night he told me that the Chief of Staff in the Fleet had said that the men were even more respectful towards the officers than they had been before. He says that there is at present no signs of Bolshevism. . . . Anxious times, and I feel dreadfully that the example has been set by the Service.

Sept. 19. . . . Things here are in a sad way I fear. I am told it is more and more difficult to prevent gold leaving the country. Confidence has apparently not been renewed by the formation of this Government, and people are very despondent, as well they may be. It looks as if it were only a matter of time, and that not so very long, before we—and with us probably the whole world—will find itself in a financial crisis from which nobody seems able to see a way out. . . . Another thing which I fear has largely wounded our credit is the recent events in the Fleet.

When the news was flashed all over the world of the Invergordon mutiny, foreign investors, mindful that both Russian and German revolutions had begun by naval mutinies, hastened to withdraw their credits from London, thus forcing the pound off the Gold Standard.

. . . I am told that shoals of telegrams are reaching the men from socialistic and communistic bodies abroad, and

that, curious as it may seem, these messages of sympathy, or urging them on, are having a directly opposite effect on the receivers, who, one of the Board of Admiralty assured me, are heartily ashamed of the role they have played. I sincerely hope that this is really the case, for then there would appear to be little sign of Bolshevism.

I deprecate the manner in which the men's shocking behaviour has been met, though to a large degree I sympathize with them and believe that under the circumstances it is probably the wisest course. There was what almost amounted to panic on the Stock Exchange yesterday and this morning, but I hope that a week-end may be productive of some recovery. . . .

Sept. 21. I had a nasty shock, but no surprise, when I opened the paper and saw that the very thing that this Government had set themselves up to prevent had taken place. Hurriedly I went into the City to try and learn what *had* happened and what was likely to happen. The City was like one of the dead, in the streets that is to say, because the Stock Exchange is closed and is, I hear, likely to remain closed. . . . I think I may say that, on the whole, people were by no means as upset as I expected. There were even one or two who tentatively suggested that, after all, in the future it may not prove a bad thing. . . . These people hold that the pound has long been above its true value, and that indeed its value ever since the war has not been more than somewhere about 16s., and that to find its true value now will ultimately do good. It is not easy to understand many of these theories, for, after all, theories they are.

To him personally the depreciation of the pound proved a heavy blow; it meant the loss of a great part of their income, and he was already then in difficulties. Finance had ever been to him a closed book, and his connection with the B.O.D. had led him into regions where he had soon found himself completely out of his depth, while his optimism, his boundless faith in others, made him an easy victim to exploit. Financial embarrassment and ill-health were to darken the remaining days of his life.

That winter he again went out to Bagdad. The B.O.D. Co., no longer purely British but strengthened by powerful Italian, Franco-Swiss, and German groups, for more than three years his constant preoccupation alternating between high hopes and bitter disappointments, was finally coming to an arrangement with the Irak Government, and he and Sir E. Mountain, who had succeeded him as Chairman of the Company, went out together to clinch matters, via Cairo, where he was able at last to gratify a long-cherished wish to see the relics of Tutankhamen. A few years or even months before such a journey would have filled him with joy—this time he was glad to return home.

A few weeks of quiet at Cannes seemed, however, to set him up again. He went about Paris that spring, as usual; he was present at his friend General Weygand's reception by the French Academy and greatly admired the latter's eloquent oration. He himself was engrossed with a speech on the Battle of Camperdown, which he intended delivering at the Navy Club dinner over which he was to preside on July 15th. "A huge gathering of 180—many old acquaintances and really a very agreeable evening." His speech, about which he had taken a great deal of trouble, met with much success and there were many who declared that it was probably one of the best speeches ever made on such an occasion, but there was much comment on how ill the speaker was looking. When his wife, however, wished to join him, he refused, telling her that:

I am really as well as I ever have been—to-morrow I am off to Wemyss, where I am looking forward to a peaceful time after this horribly stuffy and dull London.

He had great belief in the recuperative qualities of his native air; his letters were peaceful and happy; but those at Wemyss who knew him so well were struck how, wandering about the Castle and place, he would linger in all his old haunts as if unable to tear himself away and sit for hours

in Chapel Gardens gazing out to sea, almost as if it were bidding a last farewell.

His wife, who had been doing a cure, was shocked when he joined her at Lausanne at the change which had come over him during the few weeks of their separation. But an energetic treatment undertaken on medical advice appeared to effect great improvement, which continued after their return to Cannes and which even a short journey to London, which he insisted on, followed by a few happy days at Esclimont with old and dear friends, the Duc and Duchesse de Bisaccia, had seemed in no ways unfavourably to affect.

On his return to Cannes he found a letter sounding him as to his acceptance of the High Commissionership of Danzig under the League of Nations; he fully realized he was not well enough to accept, but the fact of being asked pleased him.

His health continued to show improvement; the rest, the quiet, the climate of Cannes, seemed to be doing him good. He went about among his friends, resuming old habits and interests. No longer able to play golf, he took walks in the hills, became stronger, more active, in better spirits, when the illness and death of his brother Hugo, who for years had been living at Grasse, caused him a shock and a sorrow. And yet once more his buoyant nature enabled him to overcome even this trouble.

By Easter he had so far recovered as to be able to help to arrange a charity ball for Sunny Bank Hospital and to thoroughly enjoy the visit of the Mediterranean Fleet and their Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Fisher; he went on board the *Queen Elizabeth* and the *Glorious*—never so happy as on a man-of-war—and even began talking of a trip to Malta.

By the beginning of May he seemed so very much better that his wife, feeling that he was worried about financial affairs, offered to go to London. She reached there on

Monday 8th, but on the following Saturday a telephone call from Cannes summoned her back. She arrived on Monday morning. He had been very, very ill—an attack of uraemia—and not expected to live through that night, but had rallied. She found him quite cheerful, reading the papers, commenting on current events, discussing future plans.

But the next day he was worse, and from then on gradually sank. The arrival of his nephew and niece on Sunday morning roused him from a state of semi-unconsciousness; he was overjoyed to see them. But that afternoon he no longer recognized Canon Sheppard, who had come over from St. Raphael.

It was spring—the enchanting Mediterranean spring which he so loved. The nightingales sang under his windows, the scent of the orange-blossom floated in to where he lay—unconscious—with life slowly ebbing away.

Surrounded by those he loved, tended by two devoted Sunny Bank nurses, by his faithful servant Celestin Mineri, he passed away peacefully on Empire Day (May 24th) at 11 a.m., the hour of the Armistice, a triumphant smile on his lips, a smile that still lingered when they laid him in his coffin.

He had deemed himself forgotten, yet never did death evoke more universal or genuine manifestations of sorrow and regret. High and low, rich and poor, princes and commoners joined in mourning one who had taken so great a share in the Allied victory and whose kindly and lovable nature had endeared him alike to those who knew him most as to those who knew him least.

Allied Governments and cities, armies and navies, societies and associations, joined with one another in their tributes of esteem and regret.

The King telegraphed:

In dear Rosy I have lost one of my best and oldest friends

of 56 years' standing. The Navy will join with me in mourning the loss of one who will for all times occupy an honoured place in its history.

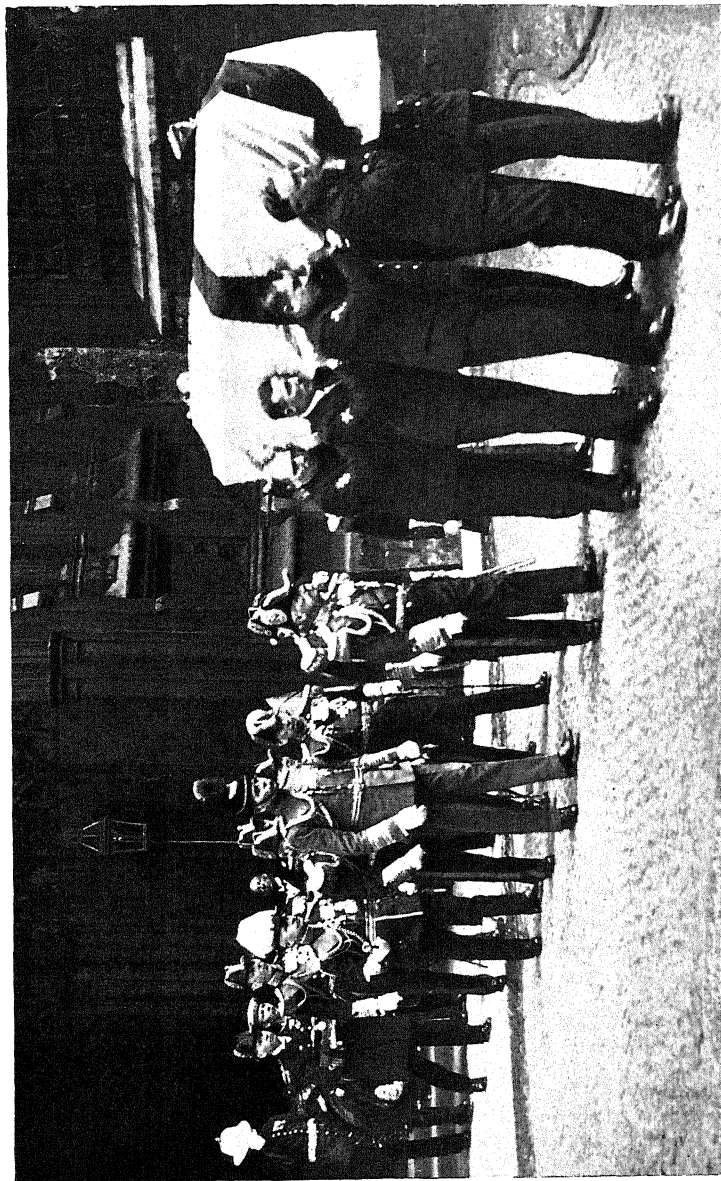
The Board of Admiralty
their regret at the loss to the Naval Service of one of its
most outstanding officers.

The French Minister of Marine his sorrow at the disappearance of
le grand ami des bons et des mauvais jours.

British Commanders-in-Chief mingled their condolences with those of the Marshals of France, while the officers who had been on his Staff grieved over the loss of him whom, in the eloquent words of Admiral Burmester, to serve under had been
a pleasure, a privilege and an inspiration.

Innumerable were the letters, telegrams, messages which poured in from friends of every nationality, every class of life. Comrades-at-arms, naval and military, former ship-mates, from Admirals to Bluejackets, many of the latter touchingly testifying to the devotion of the lower deck, while amongst the countless floral offerings side by side with the gorgeous wreaths of the Governments of France and Japan, of the Board of Admiralty, of the French Navy, the rosemary spray of the Training Ship *Mercury's* "farewell and love—he did all kind things kindly"—bore witness to the loveliness of his nature; the wreath of the women of Liège—"en souvenir de notre délivrance 1918"—to the gratitude felt for his war services.

Nowhere had his death caused greater sorrow than in France, where he had long been revered as the great war leader, the co-signatory with Foch of the Armistice, the staunch and faithful ally. Government and people now prepared to render him the same honours as to their own great war chiefs. The Minister of Marine, M. Georges



THE FUNERAL OF ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET, LORD WESTER WEMYSS,
AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY, ON MAY 30TH 1933

Leygues, so soon to follow him,* hurried from Paris to pay his last respects to the friend and collaborator of Armistice and peace negotiations days; the naval, military, and civil authorities, the municipality and the town of Cannes vied with one another in bringing him their last tribute, as did the British community headed by Mr. John Taylor the Vice-Consul, a friend of many years, who with loving care organized the funeral service in Christ Church, the church where he had been married, his daughter christened, and he had read the Lessons every Sunday for so long.

It was on a gun-carriage covered with the flag of the *Euryalus*, the flag flown when he led the attack on Gallipoli, that he was to pass for the last time through the streets of Cannes, followed by the Minister of Marine, préfets, admirals, generals, all the authorities, and countless delegations.

Escorted by the Navy, the Army, the Air Force, to the booming of the guns of the saluting warship, the procession wended its way to the railway station through hushed and reverent crowds whose attitude testified, as did shuttered shops and flags half-mast, to their affection and esteem for one who had dwelt amongst them for nearly thirty years and long since won their hearts by his kindly simplicity and the charm of his personality.

Received at Calais by the French authorities, embarked on the torpedo-destroyer H.M.S. *Tempest*, escorted by a French cruiser to the limit of their territorial waters, he rested in Chatham Dockyard Church watched over by the Navy which had ever been dear to him until the solemn service in Westminster Abbey, where representatives of the King, the Admiralty, the Dominions, naval and military officers and friends joined in the nation's tribute to one who had so faithfully served it.

And then—home.

* Monsieur Leygues died in the autumn of 1933.

For a day and a night he lay in the chapel of the grey old Castle of his forefathers he had always passionately clung to, mourned by the people of Wemyss whose joys and sorrows he had ever shared even as they had his, and who now flocked from far and wide to pay their last respects and farewell, and follow when on June 1st, to the tolling of the passing bell, through the steep grey streets of the old "haven town" of West Wemyss, past the harbour built by Earl David, he was borne to his last home.

In the sacred ground of Chapel Gardens, within sight and sound of the sea, at the foot of the ruin where his great ancestor had lived and laboured, was laid to rest all that was mortal of that most illustrious scion of the House of Wemyss, while the minister, the Rev. J. Kennedy, thus spoke the parting benediction:

Father of mercies and God of all comfort, look in Thy tender love and pity, we beseech Thee, on Thy servants in their bereavement, mourning the departure of a beloved husband, father, friend.

We give Thee heartfelt thanks for all Thou wert to him, and for all Thou didst make him unto us,

For Thy great and manifold gifts to him as Thy faithful servant, and as the trusted Leader and Commander of men we give Thee thanks,

For the noble services Thou didst enable him to render to our beloved King, and to the King's subjects and Empire, in the dark days of warfare, amid many distresses,

For his unfailing courage and unfaltering devotion,

For his truth and penetrating judgment, and decisive will,

For his winsome personality, and triumphant patience,

For his ever seeking to find and use to high purpose the best in men,

For his unaffected humility, and lofty vision of duty,

For his love of the grey old castle of his fathers, and his native shore,

For his deep kindly interest in the folk of the place of his birth,

For bringing home to us his sacred dust, to be laid to rest in the peace of God in mother earth, after the tumult of warfare, and beyond the agitations of the troubled councils of men, the waves of the sea he loved breaking ever in rhythmic salutation at his feet,

We give Thee thanks, most gracious God.

And we beseech Thee, Almighty Father, that we, being inspired by the example of those who have gone before may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Rejoicing in the communion of Thy saints, Thy whole family in Heaven and on earth, we pray that when this changeful life has passed away we may meet in the Kingdom of Thy glory with those whom we have loved, when there shall be no more sickness, or sighing, or sorrow, or pain, or death; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

•

SERVICE RECORD

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET LORD WESTER WEMYSS

G.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., D.C.L. (Oxon.), LL.D. (Cam.)

Born	12th April, 1864
Entered	15th July, 1877
Midshipman	23rd September, 1879
Sub-Lieutenant	24th September, 1883
Lieutenant	31st March, 1887
Commander	31st August, 1898
Captain	6th November, 1901
Rear-Admiral	19th April, 1911
Vice-Admiral	6th December, 1916
Admiral	21st February, 1919
Admiral of the Fleet	1st November, 1919
Retired	12th April, 1929
Died	24th May, 1933

APPOINTMENTS

<i>Britannia</i> (Training Ship)	15. 7.77 to 24. 7.79
<i>Bacchante</i>	25. 7.79 „ 31. 8.82
<i>Northumberland</i>	1. 9.82 „ 8. 5.83
<i>Canada</i>	9. 5.83 „ - 9.83
<i>Excellent</i> (for Examinations)	8. 9.84 „ 8.10.85
<i>Hecla</i>	12.10.85 „ - 10.87
<i>Osborne</i> (Royal Yacht)	4.10.87 „ 15. 9.89
<i>Anson</i> , as Flag-Lieutenant to Rear-Admiral Tracey, 2nd in Command Channel Squadron	16. 9.89 „ 18. 2.90
<i>Undaunted</i>	18. 2.90 „ 20. 6.93
Torpedo Boat No. 21	6. 5.92
<i>Andromache</i> (Manœuvres)	11. 7.93 „ 29. 8.93
<i>Empress of India</i>	11. 9.93
<i>Alexandra</i> as Flag-Lieutenant to Rear- Admiral Seymour (Manœuvres)	17. 7.95 „ 19.10.95
<i>Astrea</i>	5.11.95 „ 31. 8.96

<i>Victoria and Albert</i> (Royal Yacht)	31. 8.96 to	— 9.98
<i>Minerva</i> (Manœuvres)	11. 7.99 „	— 8.99
<i>Niobe</i>	26. 8.99 „	26.11.00
President for special service	1. 1.01 „	25. 2.01
<i>Ophir</i>	26. 2.01 „	6.11.01
President for special service at Admiralty	19. 2.02 „	12. 8.02
	8.10.02 „	25.10.02
<i>Victory</i> for <i>Superb</i>	28.11.02 „	1. 8.03
<i>Racer</i> and Osborne College in Command	1. 8.03 „	1. 9.05
<i>Suffolk</i>	1. 9.05 „	27. 4.08
Courses	29. 9.08 „	— 3.09
<i>Albion</i>	15. 3.09 „	19. 8.09
<i>Vivid</i> for Command of R.N. Barracks and as Commodore, Devonport	20. 8.09 „	20. 9.10
<i>Balmoral Castle</i> and as Commodore II Class	20. 9.10 „	3. 1.11
<i>Vivid</i> for R.N. Barracks as Commodore II Class	3. 1.11 „	25. 4.11
Rear-Admiral, 2nd Squadron	29.10.12 „	28.10.13
Rear-Admiral Commanding Cruiser Force S.N.O., Mudros, and special service in Dardanelles	1. 8.14 „	12. 2.15
16. 2.15 „	1. 1.16	
Commander-in-Chief, East Indies and Egypt Station	1. 1.16 „	— 6.17
A Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty : As Deputy First Sea Lord	6. 9.17 „	27.12.17
As First Sea Lord	27.12.17 „	1.11.19

DISTINCTIVE SERVICES AND DECORATIONS

- 6th November, 1901. Specially promoted to Captain on the return of H.M.S. *Ophir* from Royal visit to the Colonies.
- 24th December, 1901. Appointed M.V.O., 4th Class.
1902. Attached to Military Department Coronation Executive Committee.
- 14th April, 1910. Appointed Naval Aide-de-Camp to His Majesty the King.
- 17th January, 1911. Appointed C.M.G. for services in conveying H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught to South Africa in H.M.S. *Balmoral Castle* for the opening of the Cape Parliament.

- 16th August, 1915. Mentioned in Despatches for invaluable services in connection with Gallipoli landing.
- 1st January, 1916. Appointed K.C.B.
- 10th January, 1916. Mentioned in Despatches for valuable services in connection with the evacuation of Gallipoli.
- 12th October, 1916. Mentioned in Despatches for cordial co-operation with military forces.
- 7th November, 1917. Mentioned in Despatches for valuable services in connection with military operations.
- 3rd June, 1918. Appointed G.C.B.
- 11th November, 1918. Signed Armistice on behalf of Allies.
- 25th June, 1919. D.C.L. (Oxon.) conferred.
- 23rd July, 1919. LL.D. (Cam.) conferred.
- 1st November, 1919. Specially promoted to Admiral of the Fleet for valuable war services.
- 15th December, 1919. Mentioned in Despatches for services rendered to Military Headquarters while in command of Eastern Mediterranean.
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